

**Every child matters:  
a small scale enquiry into policy and practice**

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## **ABSTRACT**

1. This research study examines aspects of the effectiveness of the Every Child/Youth Matters (ECM/YM) programme with regard to its implementation in 2006. Part 1 of the study explores the practical implications of ECM/YM for professional practice across the different welfare agencies, through a series of loosely structured interviews with managers, case workers and young offenders (aged up to 16 years). From an analysis of the data, using grounded theory approaches, three key findings were inducted. These findings suggested the following:
  - I. A lack of consistency in the quality of targeted support provided by integrated services for the most vulnerable children and young people and their families;
  - II. A lack of fine tuning in:
    - a) the identification of vulnerability across different cohorts of children and young people, according to their changing circumstances;
    - b) the ways in which information (about vulnerable children and young people) is shared and used across the different welfare agencies.
2. Reflection on these findings led to a further review of the literature that focuses on critiques of social policy. The analyses of research data within this domain suggest the limitations of social policy making that conforms to a linear, mechanistic approach, because it does not respond to

individualised, local need. This suggests further that it is the policies themselves that account for the perceived lack of fine tuning identified in the above findings in part one of this research thesis. Therefore it was important, next, to capture data which drew on respondents' personal perceptions of welfare provision, which might endorse, or otherwise, those aspects in which part 1 of the study suggested that the ECM/YM agenda is failing, in some localities, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

3. In part two of this study, further research was conducted through a series of extended conversations with: male offenders (aged between 16 and 24 years); parents/partners of prisoners; managers from voluntary/not for profit organisations and senior multi-agency professionals. The data were analysed using a phenomenological approach. Overall, the findings suggest that a purely mechanistic, evidenced-based approach to providing welfare support for vulnerable children, young people and their families can result in negative outcomes when compared with a more contextualised, holistic approach.

# **PART ONE.**

## **Chapter 1.**

### **1. Introduction**

*“Inequality and exclusion in society is a phenomenon as old as societies themselves. Efforts towards addressing these problems have manifested in a range of ideologies and practices, from Marxist communism to social democracy to the 'third way' of recent years”. (Social Inclusion and Regeneration, 2003).*

The above provides me with an apposite starting point for the introduction to this PhD research thesis. The underlying factors that brought about the policy changes and initiatives that constitute the Every Child/Youth Matters (referred to hereafter as ECM/YM) programmes for change stem from the inequalities that exist in our society. There is nothing new in this process, nor in the practice of governments moving to bring about sweeping changes to dispel inequality or exclusion. However, the way in which governments go about implementing such changes is what is of interest to this thesis. Through the findings of two qualitative research studies and conducting reviews of the literature I have been able to explore some of the outcomes of the ECM programme for change, from the viewpoints of different welfare professionals and of young people and families who were experiencing different degrees of vulnerability and deprivation.

### **Box 1: Every Child Matters.**

“Overall, this country is still one where life chances are unequal. This damages not only those children born into disadvantage, but our society as a whole. We all stand to share the benefits of an economy and society with less educational failure, higher skills, less crime, and better health. We all share a duty to do everything we can to ensure every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

Our aim is to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people”.  
(Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Every Child Matters Green Paper, 2003c).

**Box 2: A President's wish for the children of America.**

"I want all our children to go to schools worthy of their potential – schools that challenge them, inspire them and instil in them a sense of wonder about the world around them. I want them to have the chance to go to college – even if their parents aren't rich. And I want them to get good jobs: jobs that pay well and give them benefits like health care, jobs that let them spend time with their own kids and retire with dignity.

These are the things I want for you – to grow up in a world with no limits on your dreams and no achievements beyond your reach....And I want every child to have the same chances to learn and dream and grow and thrive...."

Barack Obama, President elect, January 2009 on the eve of his Presidential inauguration. (Doyle, 2009)

It is no coincidence that there are certain similarities between the two quotations in the above Boxes 1 and 2, nor that there is an air of wistfulness in the writing of each.

The UK government - at the instigation of Prime Minister Tony Blair - introduced the Every Child Matters/Youth Matters (ECM/YM) agendas in the wake of the brutal death of Victoria Climbié at the hands of her carers. This resulted in the Laming Inquiry in 2003, the purpose of which was to "find out why this once happy, smiling, enthusiastic little girl – brought to this country by a relative for 'a better life' – ended her days the victim of almost unimaginable cruelty....Victoria's great-aunt and her boyfriend were convicted of her murder"

(Great Britain. HMG 2003b.) Box 1 contains a statement from the Every Child Matters Green Paper (Great Britain. Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003c p. 11) that has a direct resonance with the aspirations of President Obama as expressed in a letter to his daughters on the eve of his inauguration as President of the United States in 2009, (Box 2). Through the aims of the Every Child Matters initiative, the government was stating its intention to prevent the tragic circumstances that led to Victoria's death from occurring again, with the intention of improving the educational, developmental and life outcomes for all children, but particularly those who could be identified as being at a similar level of risk to Victoria.

The above aspirations of President and Prime Minister have similarities with the aims of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as stated by the US Department of Education in 2002: "our commitment to you, and to all Americans is to see every child in America – regardless of ethnicity, income, or background – achieve high standards" (Francis and Skelton, 2005, p. 42). Just as the ECM policies aim to improve on past failures in the UK's systems of care and provision for children and young people, so Mr Obama's aspirations can be seen as a declaration to improve on the educational outcomes for future generations of American children and young people. Both Prime Minister and future President are striking a note of optimism through their words, which are tinged with an earnest expectation that things in the future will be an improvement on what has gone before.

In the US, the NCLB programme earned extensive criticism from education professionals who saw it as an *outcomes-based* approach to education. This criticism implies that such an approach could actually *reduce* the effective

instruction of children in schools because of the danger that American states might lower their achievement goals and encourage their teachers to "teach to the test." (This in turn has an uncanny resonance with criticism of our own SATS tests in the UK). Both Prime Minister and President are stating the tenets of what they are espousing for their respective countries; their words are also tinged with the earnest expectation that things in the future will be an improvement on what has gone before .

### **The research aim and questions.**

At the very beginning of this research project I set out to explore the government legislation underpinning the overall ECM programmes. I wanted to discover the extent to which the government's *espoused* aims, (as expressed through ECM legislation), were actually *engaged* with, in practice, by the front line welfare agencies of education, social services, health and youth justice. To this end, I decided the main research question, or focus, of my research would be:

"To explore the impact of the Every Child Matters/Youth Matters programme on professional practice across the different welfare agencies".

In the first research study I undertook, I looked at how welfare practitioners from the different agencies (education, health, social services and youth justice) were interpreting the ECM/YM legislation in relation to their own professional practice. From the analysis of these data I inducted four key findings, behind which lay further issues to explore. These issues stemmed from the social policies that were the drivers for changes to professional practice across the welfare agencies.



From these I identified a second research focus, or question, that I wanted to explore, which was:

“A critical appraisal of the social policies that underpin the Every Child Matters/Youth Matters programme”.

My analysis of the data from this second research study was conducted within a framework that I structured closely around the literature of critical social policy, which enabled me to explore the origins and complexities of the government’s social policies that relate to the aims of the ECM agenda.

## **1.1. Addressing the research questions: progression through the thesis.**

### **1.1.1. Chapter 2.**

In this chapter I outline the literature I reviewed for the first research study and discuss it in terms of two distinct categories: conceptual and research literature. An example of conceptual literature, which I found of particular interest to my research, is the oral (and written) evidence of the DfES Select Committee Meetings (Great Britain. DfES (2005b; Great Britain. House of Commons (2006c). This was valuable because the information contained in the minutes often reflects (at times) an astute criticality on the parts of the chair and committee. When questioning government advisers and “experts”, MP’s bring significant pressure to bear through their probing of assumptions and their relentless quest for clarity in responses to the questions they ask. The information contained in these minutes opened out many significant aspects of

the wider context of Every Child/Youth Matters, which suggested further concepts and issues for my conceptual framework. From the literature I identify two key issues for research, school improvement and integrated services.

### **1.1.2. Chapter 3.**

In this chapter I discuss my rationale for conducting two research studies and the overall methodology of the research. The findings from the first research study directed me towards a further literature review, which required me to a more analytical and critical approach towards the underpinning factors that gave rise to the ECM/YM programme for change. The outcome of this analysis was a shift in the emphasis of my research focus towards social policy. In this third chapter I illustrate the conceptual framework for the first research study, which draws directly on the sources of my literature review. I discuss the necessary ethical guidance for the research and consider some of the ethical issues that may arise in the process of interviewing respondents. For both research studies, the respondents were selected by the contacts I that I had nurtured personally, within different local authorities, and who were themselves welfare professionals. I had to rely on *their* selection of participants, the rationale for which was no more prescribed than that it represented a convenient, or available, sample of respondents. Because I was wholly dependent on my network of contacts for arranging the interviews, inevitably I was not able to include the full range of respondent categories, such as teachers. Similarly, the number and nature of interviews were determined by who was available and their case load at the time rather than by what and who I would have interviewed if I had been free to choose.

### 1.1.3. Chapter 4.

Analysis and interpretation of the data, research study 1.

My chosen method of data analysis for the first research study was grounded theory, from which I applied a selection of analytic tools. Through this methodology, the coding and analysis of the data provided me with *findings* or hypotheses, rather than theory, which enabled me to tap into “the fullest extent [of] the in vivo patterns of integration in the data itself” (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, page 109).

- The first finding I inducted from the data analysis contrasted the centralised performance indicators that are generated by government systems, for the assessment and evaluation of welfare need, with an altogether different, more effective set of indicators, created locally, to trigger support for children and young people and assess their vulnerability.
- The second finding highlighted the high quality of targeted support in place to support the most vulnerable children and young people in one of the local authorities that participated in the research interviews. The data suggests that *universal* welfare provision may not be as well-structured for children and young people who are not obviously vulnerable (but who may become so).
- The third finding suggests that where multi agency teams meet regularly, it is the *localised* nature of the teams that is a major factor in the effectiveness of how they use information to support children and young people.

When considered collectively, the findings begin to open up some of the enormous complexities that exist in the process of identifying vulnerability and the many external and internal factors that affect the degree to which welfare agencies are able to realise the aims of the ECM/YM programme. This prompted me to think about the ways in which the research respondents themselves might have perceived the quality of the welfare support they received, at times when they were most at risk. How would they view the differing practice and provision across the welfare agencies?

#### **1.1.4. Chapter 5.**

In this chapter I discuss the development of the rationale and research design for the second part of this thesis, which is centred on the second research study. I examine the findings from the first study within the context of the second literature review, which contributes to my second conceptual framework. This framework draws on political, critical social policy and social contexts. I discuss a “different discourse for analysis” and explore the influences that contribute to the language of New Labour and the neo-liberal approach to government, embraced by Margaret Thatcher’s conservative government towards the end of the 1970’s, and continued by New Labour when they came to power in 1997. I appraise critically the Labour Party’s approach to (social) policy making and argue the shortcomings of this approach in realising the far-reaching aims of the ECM/YM programme. This is because the inherent difficulties presented by the unhappy outcomes of extreme vulnerability and multi-deprivation cannot be easily remedied through the construction of linear, mechanistic policies that recommend interventions as “causes” that will produce “effects”. I suggest that

this evidence based approach to policy-making and evaluation of outcomes does not do justice to the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the welfare needs of individuals and groups. Finally, I acknowledge that if my second research study were to make any realistic contribution to examining the aims, shortcomings and successes of ECM/YM programmes, I needed to move closer to understanding the effects of deprivation and vulnerability on young people and the impact of these on their lives and outlooks. I needed to capture evidence that would reflect the realities of their lives and perhaps indicate a direction in which social policy could progress towards “addressing the root causes of disadvantage” (Broadhurst et al. 2007, p.11).

#### **1.1.5. Chapter 6.**

My reading and analysis of the second literature review helped to develop and move my thinking towards a more critical appraisal of the influences that define the government’s approach to social policy making. The first study is concerned with the *practical implications* of the policies that underpin the ECM/YM programme. The second study explores the *context and underlying influences* that shaped the government’s approach to (social) policy making. Therefore, I needed to develop a new rationale, which could be explained within a different theoretical framework.

The aims of the second study were; a) to identify the ways in which social and educational policies are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and multi deprived children, young people and families and b) to establish the extent to which the aims of the ECM/YM programme are achieved. These aims gave rise to a second research question: “*A critical analysis of the government’s*

*social/welfare policies that underpin the aims of the ECM/YM programme. Are these policies fit for purpose?”*

For this study, I interviewed a group of respondents whose personal circumstances constituted a particular set of welfare needs. This group comprised the parents and partners of prisoners and young male offenders aged between 17 and 24 years of age. I also interviewed two senior multi-agency welfare professionals and a young man of 18 years of age, who had been in care for thirteen years. I wanted to capture data that would reflect the respondents' own perceptions of the way things appeared to them in their conscious, everyday lives about issues such as vulnerability, support, deprivation and achievement. Therefore, I would require a framework for analysis and inquiry that would give this knowledge validity and theoretical meaning.

I decided the most suitable framework was to be found in phenomenology, or the discipline of “philosophical investigation” (Stewart and Mickunas, p.3). This approach enabled me, the researcher, to interpret people's individual understanding (of “things” or phenomena) and provided me with an appropriate context within which to argue and construct the outcomes from the data analysis.

I structured a four stage model for the data analysis that allowed for the *nature* of the data (the respondents' personal interpretations and narratives) to be upheld and enabled me, the researcher, to “make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (Smith, 2006, p. 51). This methodology would go beyond the basic coding processes and permitted me to capture examples of data that might be “quirky” and therefore truly authentic and free of

any bias from my own perceptions. I formalised my research analysis in order to give it a direction that would allow for links between emerging issues and the second conceptual framework. I selected three interrelated theoretical issues to underpin my analysis, which reflected my own “specific research interests”

(Ribbens and Edwards 2008 p. 125):

- The identification of any *models of support* through which respondents received welfare agency provision;
- The impact of this support when they most needed it (social exclusion);
- Issues from the data that connected with the key areas of policy outlined in the conceptual framework (the critical social policy, political and social research contexts).

### **1.1.6. Chapter 7.**

Analysis and interpretation of the data, research study 2.

At the start of this chapter I outline key aspects of the design of the second research study (the plan, the structure and the strategy) and discuss how this (and the first research study) can be located within the alternative “paradigm of naturalistic inquiry” (Guba and Lincoln 1985, p. 37). I illustrate the process I adopted for paring down the initial twelve key issues from the data analysis, to a final four, which formed the basis of my findings for this study.

#### **Finding 1: “Problems in matching social policies to the complex needs of vulnerable people”.**

The research data shows that despite the early diagnosis of learning needs of a child in school, the resultant learning support does not necessarily guarantee

the child will achieve well at school or enjoy positive life opportunities. I discuss this finding with regard to two research respondents, both of whom had been in care as children, but whose eventual life opportunities were in opposition to one another. One, Simon, had attained outstanding educational success and the other, Chris, was unemployed, with no qualifications and a long history of offending.

Learning support for Chris had been characterised by a *linear*, evidence-based approach in which the agencies of school, health and social services had not worked to ensure that support for Chris was structured to meet all his needs.

Simon, by contrast, had benefited from a *holistic* approach to his welfare support, evidenced by stability throughout his foster placement and consistent input from the agencies of school, social services and Connexions.

The literature argues that evidence-based social policy grounded in quantitative and statistical data, “conceals as much as it reveals” (Chapman 2004, p.11) because such policies only measure the *intended* outcomes. The complexities surrounding welfare need give rise to many unintended outcomes, which cannot be measured.

**Finding 2. “The importance of the role of the Voluntary sector in supporting young offenders and their families”.**

The research data from this study reveals that the mothers and partners of offenders (young men aged 16 - 18 years) perceived very clear differences in the approaches adopted towards supporting their families, by the prison services and the voluntary organisation, POPS (Partners of Prisoners). They considered the approach of the prison staff to be one that focused on “box ticking” characteristic of an institution. On the other hand they perceived that



the workers from POPS fulfilled a role far more sensitive and empathetic. I used the literature to interpret these experiences: the mothers and partners viewed the prison staff as adhering to their prescribed, centralised role, or the ‘actuarial techniques’ of the job. These ‘techniques’ included tasks such as “classification, risk assessment and resource management” (Clarke et al. 2000, p.178). By contrast, the staff from the voluntary organisation POPS were perceived to deal with the “transformative” issues relating to the families’ welfare, such as “individual need, diagnosis and rehabilitation” (ibid. P. 178). These differences in the nature of welfare support provided by the prison service and the voluntary organisation are discussed at length in the literature, which debates the marked “managerialistic” approach to welfare reform by successive governments over the last twenty years (Clark et al. 2000). This and the current (at the time of writing, 2009) Labour party’s preoccupation with devolving central state responsibility to local partnerships, can be seen as giving rise to a situation that is problematic for welfare provision. The data from this research study reflects the current political climate, wherein social policy generally is urging voluntary organisations to fulfil an increasingly important role. The important role in this example concerns the rehabilitation and support of offenders and their families, which POPS is expected to fulfil without the assistance of any significant or consistent stream of funding.

**Finding 3. “Maslow revisited : skills for the ‘older young people’s’ workforce and models of good practice”.**

Where the care of vulnerable “older young people” is ineffective, it can have a pronounced negative impact on their *higher level needs*, such as self worth,

realising their potential and self actualisation, outlined by Maslow in his hierarchy of need (Ventegodt et al. 2003, p. 1051). Existing government policy prescribes six core areas of skills and knowledge for the workforce that cares for children and young people, in the document Common Core of Skills and Knowledge (CCSK) for the Children's Workforce (Great Britain. DfES, 2005c). However, the CCSK has been recommended for those who work with children and young people, not the "older young people", or vulnerable young adults (such as the respondents for this study). For this older range of young adults, a core of skills, values and capacities that go beyond simply "knowing" and "understanding" would be required, which acknowledges the need for a 'higher order' level of skills and values. These could include: being able to consult and advise young adults on developing their higher levels of need, such as personal goals and longer term aspirations and their sense of worth (located in the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy). Two models of good practice were identified from interviews with young offenders who had been, or were in the care of two organizations: one, an organisation in the voluntary sector (Cumbria Personal Development Associates, CPDA) and one in the public sector, comprising police probationary professionals working on a rehabilitation project (the Scafell Project) for imprisoned offenders. Working practice in each organization had in common a set of key elements that were effective in supporting, nurturing and advocating for young, vulnerable adults in their higher levels of need. Several of these elements of good practice correspond to the "higher order" level of skills, which are discussed above as being appropriate for people with working vulnerable young adults.

**Finding 4: “Addressing welfare problems that are the outcomes of a ‘patriarchal society’”.**

The research data give evidence of schools whose ethos and values (no doubt unwittingly), conspired to foster an environment where a minority of vulnerable young people had become offenders. These were the sons of mothers I interviewed through POPS). The mothers attributed this to the existence of a “patriarchal society”, which fosters a poor role model for young people. I have not used the data analysis to imply that the schools in question were deliberately setting up the young people for failure, but rather that the prevailing systems and values were perhaps akin to a more traditional, patriarchal style of leadership and management associated with a past age, when corporal punishment and enforced discipline were the norm. Where this was the case, this perceived “patriarchal attitude” actually presented a barrier to securing the successful outcomes of the ECM programme for and on behalf of the particular young people whose mothers I interviewed.

Across the wider welfare agency domain, the research data show how other respondents’ perceive government documentation, describing the tone and nature as “dictatorial” and “authoritarian”, which implies a prescriptive, centralised form of control, similar to the patriarchal attitude perceived by the respondents in the POPS interviews.

“An increasing separation between policy and delivery has acted as a barrier to involving, in policy-making, those people who are responsible for delivering on the front line....”. The literature is critical of the lack of joined-up government at both policy and management level and of the “fragmenting effects of managerialism” (Clarke et al p. 52). I link this with the second finding, above,

and examine the issues that characterise the differences between the aims and philosophies of the voluntary and Community Sector and those of government policies. This has contributed to the conflict that has been described thus:

“tension between the economic and social goals [of Labour]....” and the fact that “....collaboration between providers around client needs in social care is not compatible with....output based performance indicators” (Clarke et al p.55). The research evidence from the second finding identifies two aspects of social policy in which this type of conflict/incompatibility are apparent.

### **1.1.7. Chapter 8.**

Reflections on criticality and analytical concepts.

At the beginning of this chapter I provide a resume of my findings from the second research study, discuss the wider context for the research findings and briefly consider what, on reflection, I might have done differently, particularly with regard to the criticality and analytical concepts that comprised my framework for analysis.

I found the literature in the field of “managerialisation” a rich source of aspects and concepts that were particularly relevant to the discussions that had arisen from the findings from my first research study. These new ideas helped me to articulate a further range of analytic concepts, many of which appeared to be relevant to the new direction of my research. The concepts I chose to include in my second theoretical and conceptual framework include:

- The significance of the role of the voluntary sector in providing welfare support for vulnerable children, young people and their families;
- The evidence-based approach to social policy;

- Maslow's hierarchy of need. Despite the ubiquity with which Maslow's hierarchy appears to arise in theory and debate (particularly in the field of management and motivation) I selected it as analytic tool for this research study because Maslow's conceptual framework closely matches the language in which the young offender respondents chose to describe their experiences.

Of the many areas and concepts I engaged with from the literature, others that I might have chosen to instead/as well as include:

- The breakdown of the family.
- Hindrances to young fathers sharing the care of children.
- Barriers to multi agency working.
- Process of (Ofsted) inspections.

I chose not to incorporate these aspects into my research because whilst they represented, in themselves, very interesting areas for debate and analysis, they were not relevant to the discourse I needed, in which to debate the research perspectives of both research studies.

I go on to discuss the findings from the both research studies with regard to their implications for practice. The findings from the first indicate where and how practice across the welfare agencies might be more finely tuned, in order to reflect better the aims and objectives of the Every Child Matters/Youth Matters programme. The findings from the second study provided the *evidence* of the need to do this.

I conclude with a reflection on areas for future research; the data and findings that arise from both research studies suggest a number of areas. For example: an in-depth, or longitudinal study of the circumstances of young men at risk and

the impact of these circumstances on *their* children and partners; a research study to follow up and extend my own understanding of the role played by the voluntary/third sector across the broader spectrum of welfare provision, looking at how the sector contributes to supporting the different welfare agencies, not just those connected with the criminal justice sector.

## **1.2. Values and beliefs.**

My own values and beliefs relate closely to the content of and rationale for these two main research questions and have also shaped my approach to the overall research design, data collection and analysis. I have always been committed to inclusion, both socially and educationally. I also have deep concerns for those children, young people and families who are marginalised in society; those who are vulnerable and those who suffer from a combination of factors that constitute multi-deprivation (see in more detail, Chapter 6). These concerns are not confined to those who are at the extremes of poverty or deprivation, but include those groups and individuals whose personal circumstances may conspire to render them vulnerable due to less tangible factors such as personal anxieties, self doubt and the unfortunate and unforeseen events that can lead young people to offend. My belief is that the many different sets of social policies put in place by governments over the years, including those related to ECM, have done very little to realise social and educational inclusion.

These values and beliefs played a significant part in my decision to focus on the ECM programme for this research project and gave me the opportunity to explore further my understanding of the nature and origins of social policies and some of the reasons why they have not brought about comprehensive change to

the life chances of children and young people who endure the circumstances of vulnerability and deprivation.

My design for both research studies reflects these values and beliefs, with regard to:

- the nature and type of research respondents;
- the ways in which I gathered data;
- the methods of data analysis

The focus of this research is closely bound to aspects of people's lives that are complex and may often be closely linked to circumstances that incorporate social, economic and health related difficulties. Therefore for each research study I favoured loosely structured interviews that were conducted on a one to one basis or in small groups, to encourage people to speak freely about aspects that might be too personal or painful to share through, say, a questionnaire or a focus group (see further detail in Section 3.5.2.). I created sets of very open-ended questions that I believed would provide the best conditions for me to guide the direction of discussions according to any changes in respondents' emotional responses, should the need arise. In the light of this, I decided that the data I collected from this chosen area of research would be most effectively interpreted through qualitative analysis, a methodology that would be sensitive to (and permit a voice for) respondent's individual interpretations of their experiences of welfare provision and the ECM agenda. I applied grounded theory to the analysis of the first research study, because this would allow for scrutiny of the data and the nuances and underlying meanings that would reveal the "real" issues faced by professionals and vulnerable young people. I also felt it would be an appropriate method of analysis as I was not seeking to prove or

disprove any formally stated theory (about ECM, welfare provision or other related aspect) but rather to deduct key *findings* from the data analysis.

Similarly, I chose to apply a phenomenological approach to the analysis of the data from the second research study. I decided this analytic process would be an effective tool with which to discern “people’s different perspectives and points of view about vulnerability, multi deprivation as they see them affecting their own lives” (see Section 6.5), thereby getting to the heart of respondents’ individual perceptions of their experiences. This would give me an authentic account of their own “worlds” and thereby reveal aspects in which EM policies fell short, which, through other forms of analysis, I would not have been able to access.

The overall findings from my analysis of these two research studies suggest that the government’s approach to policy making is essentially grounded in an approach that depends on *measurable outcomes*. The findings indicate that for welfare agency professionals, one of the outcomes of this approach to policy making is that managers and practitioners can come to view the implementation of the ECM programmes as purely the *delivery* of required, prescribed outcomes, in which obtaining the necessary outcomes become a means in itself.

The danger of this is that the processes and systems of complying with government legislation can begin to obscure, or eclipse, the underlying purpose and aims of the ECM policies, such as inclusion, early intervention to support children and young people and providing care and support for families.



### **1.2.1. “Reading the data”.**

In the same way that my own values and beliefs shaped my approach to the overall research design of this thesis, they also influenced my “readings” of the data when I conducted my analyses. This is apparent in the data analysis for the first research study, from which the three findings relate to: identifying vulnerability amongst children and families; the nature of targeted support, and the factors that contribute to successful multi-agency team support for looked after children. Each of these findings has, as its focus, vulnerable children and families and the means by which they are assessed/identified for support. My interpretation of the data therefore reflects the values and beliefs that I hold with regard to vulnerable young people and families, the extent of their social and educational inclusion and my concerns about the ways in which support for them has not necessarily been improved through the ECM/YM policies.

Similarly, I chose an approach to the second research study that reflected the distinct and personal perceptions of the research respondents, (vulnerable young men, the families and partners of prisoners and senior multi agency professionals). My interpretations of the data analysis for the second study retained a focus on the circumstances of the “clients” rather than the policy makers, although the overall theoretical framework for this study was located in the literature and research framework of social policy. Reading research data is never value free and so it is conceivable that another researcher, with values and beliefs different to mine, might have read the data and interpreted the “voices” quite differently. In Chapter 3, Section 3.1, I discuss the fact that the data I intended capture for this research would be in the form of value judgements, or statements people made according to their individual points of

view. Punch (1998, p. 47) discusses this in terms of the “fact to value” gap, ie the fact that there is no logical way to get from statements of facts to statements of value (or vice versa). I have addressed this “gap” through the different frameworks I structured for this research (outlined above) Another researcher (with different values, beliefs and experiences to mine, could have chosen a research different route that would have yielded different interpretations and different sets of findings.

### **1.3. Rationale for the research.**

The first research study was designed to ground the outcomes in the “language of the research” (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p. 107) and the findings were inducted from the most significant issues that emerged from the data. The data were captured from interviews with professionals across the different agencies and with a number of vulnerable young men who were in the care of youth offending agencies. In the second study, my purpose was to capture the narratives of a group of vulnerable and deprived people and record their perceptions of and responses to the reality of their lives and their experiences of the different support agencies.

The progress of this research reflects a “journey” through many different and challenging areas that relate to the outcomes of the ECM/YM policies and practices.

These include :

- the analysis of a range of day to day – and often bleak - realities and outcomes of the ECM programme;

- analyses of research respondents' "real life" perceptions, explanations and responses to the implementation of the changes espoused in the ECM programme;
- an engagement with the underlying processes and factors that influence the government's approach to policy making and how these have contributed to the content and aims of the ECM programmes for change - are these policies fit for purpose?
- the development of two different conceptual frameworks that give theoretical cohesion to the research methodology and design of each of the research studies.

Whilst my intention all along has been to ground my research in the day to day experiences of professional practitioners who administer the welfare services and the people who are the recipients of their work, this thesis also argues for the validity of the contexts selected to underpin the methodological frameworks of the overall project. The context for the first Research Study is focused on individual accounts of practice and the outcomes of practice across the welfare agencies. The context for the second study derives from the analytical discourse to the extent that the data is analysed with close attention to two aspects:

- the nature of the respondents' own particular worlds, which derives from their own, particular sets of personal circumstances (ontological);
- the knowledge and perceptions that each respondent have, which are shaped through their individual life experiences (epistemological)

### **1.3.1. My proposal and how it developed.**

For my first Research Study, I analysed data that I collected in order to explore the impact of the ECM programme on professional practice across the agencies of education, health, social services and youth justice. My main purposes were to address the impact of the ECM agenda on the bridging (or not) of the achievement and life opportunity gap that exists between children and young people from different socio-economic backgrounds, which supports the main aims of the ECM policies. The findings from the first study directed me towards a new focus for a second Research Study, for which I developed my thinking towards a more critical appraisal of the influences that contribute to the government's approach to social policy making. The focus of the first study was concerned with the *practical implications* of the policies that underpinned the ECM programme (ie the impact of ECM on professional practice). The focus of the second study had shifted to one "where analysis is targeted towards providing answers about the contexts for social policies and programmes and the effectiveness of their delivery and impact" (Ritchie and Lewis, p.201,1994). It also considered the *context and underlying influences* that shape the government's approach to (social) policy making.

### **1.3.2. Who is this research for?**

I hope that my research will benefit all those who have made the study possible through their generous contribution to interviews, providing documentation and being supportive of the project in many other, practical ways. I hope that the outcomes of my research will also be of some benefit to three distinct groups of people:

1. those who work, or who are training to work, with children and young people;
2. the children, young people and parents/carers who will be the customers, or recipients (sometimes referred to as “service users”) of the services of the care agencies;
3. the “authorities”; those experts and politicians who are (and have been) responsible for administering and evaluating the many initiatives that underpin the framework of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters (ECM and YM) and who therefore inform the government’s approach to policy-making.

### **1.3.3. Inspiration and motivation.**

My motivation for engaging in research into the implications of ECM has its origins in two features of my own life that are rooted in my experiences as an educational professional who has worked both as a “front line provider” (or teacher and school manager) and as an Ofsted inspector, concerned with the “quality control” aspects of educational provision.

From 2002 onwards, my role as an inspector of secondary schools gave me the opportunity to work in a different capacity, one in which I advised and guided teachers, whilst drawing on my own professional experiences in teaching and working with children, young people and their families. At the same time I began to write and lead training courses for teachers and I worked as a consultant with school leaders and middle managers. Throughout this career journey I continued to teach, in some of the most challenging schools locally, on a supply/contract basis. With hindsight this proved to be one of the toughest

professional challenges of my career, however the experience raised sharply my awareness of the ways in which socio-economic factors can influence, negatively, pupils' (and their families') attitudes towards education. In the schools where I was teaching it was apparent that over time, a climate of low aspiration amongst the young people and their families had evolved as a result of the combination of poorly paid (often minimum wage) work and dismal long term employment prospects. This had a negative impact on the ways in which pupils viewed their own achievements and, as a consequence, created barriers to their learning. In the longer term, these circumstances conspired to have a negative impact on pupils' overall life chance.

These experiences, gleaned from both sides of the educational "fence" (front line teaching and my advisory/developmental work as an inspector and consultant), instigated in me a deep interest in the causes that bring about change, to people and organisations, and the wider dimensions of social change and their impact on individuals. Within the two or three years after leaving full time teaching, I had acquired a whole new range of professional experiences across a much wider educational spectrum. When I came to read of the proposed changes to the Ofsted inspection framework and the new agenda of Every Child Matters, I responded to them from each of my different professional standpoints. As I read of the reasoning behind the sweeping changes being recommended, I could see what a huge undertaking they represented to those people working at the "chalk face" in teaching. I contributed to the initial ECM discussion document; I engaged in discussions about the new framework with fellow inspectors, teachers and managers across the agencies concerned (education, health, social services and youth justice). I also reflected on the

existing pressures faced by teachers in schools and across the different welfare agencies and wondered at the scale of this new task facing welfare professionals. Who would implement the changes? How would those working in schools, health centres, youth justice and social services be inducted into the new regime? And exactly what were the reasons behind the government's decisions to introduce this new agenda of "Every Child/Youth Matters"? Initially, I found answers to some of these questions within the documents produced by the government at the time, such as the Every Child Matters Summary document, (Great Britain 2003a). I read of the importance the government attached to addressing the reduced life and educational chances of children and young people living in impoverished circumstances; and to the need to do something about bridging the conspicuous gap in achievement between different children and young people from different socio-economic classes. As a practitioner I could see the implications of these two objectives. As a research student I saw an opportunity to find out just how much the proposed changes were actually benefiting the life chances of children and young people and to analyse the impact of the ECM agenda on professional practice across the agencies. Having worked in different roles connected with children and young people, I intend to ground my writing and research for this thesis in the field of the professionals, children, parents/carers and young people who are the direct recipients of the ECM agenda. My findings will be drawn from the evidence they provide me with - and not from what the legislation tells us *should* be happening. This is the standpoint, or position I have chosen to take in relation to this research project and it is informed by the developments in my own career over the last seven or eight years, which have led me to work on both sides of the

educational “fence”; as a front line teacher/practitioner and as a former Ofsted inspector and consultant.

I will conclude this section by making clear my position in undertaking this research in relation to others, to circumstances and to my own point of view. As a teacher of vulnerable students I was concerned about how teachers and professionals in other welfare agencies would respond to the scale of the tasks set through the government’s ECM programmes and policies. As an Ofsted inspector I wanted to know more about the reasons behind the legislation. And as a researcher I wanted to explore the impact of the ECM agenda on professional practice, and also to explore in which ways it was impacting on the lives of the most vulnerable young people, irrespective of what the legislation told us should be happening.

## **1.4. New Legislation**

In 2004, I read of the government’s new vision for children’s services and the proposed legislation for big changes in the way children’s services were to work together (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Treasury 2003c). New inspection arrangements were under discussion in Parliament, resulting in the New Relationship with Schools document (Great Britain. DfES 2004b), which had as its focus the Every Child Matters agenda. Inspections would in future take account of the contribution schools made to “pupil well-being” (ibid. p. 7), a phrase that was to take on an immense catalogue of meaning over the coming months.

There were to be new organisational structures set up to implement the agenda and these included Children’s Trusts, Extended Schools and Integrated



Services. The implementation was to be planned and based on A Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, (Great Britain. DfES, 2006b; A Ten Year Strategy for Childcare (Great Britain. HM Treasury 2004d) and A Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government, 2005c).

The legislation underpinning education and other care agencies was to change dramatically. Schools were still not informed about the criteria for Ofsted's judgements from the most recent "new" framework. With yet another set of changes due, how on earth would teachers and managers ever catch up?

Looking beyond schools, how would the managers and workers in the other areas of care, welfare and justice catch up with – or even understand and learn to work with - these sweeping changes?

## **1.5. The Introduction of the Every Child/Youth Matters programmes for change.**

The agenda for Every Child/Youth Matters (ECM) is one of inclusion. It is dedicated to eliminating the omissions, blockages, limitations and impediments that result in the reduced (sometimes tragically so) life opportunities suffered by children and young people from the lowest end of the socio-economic spectrum."At the lowest end" refers to those children, young people and families whose circumstances exclude them from achieving their best and from having equality of life opportunity, employment and the chance to be happy, healthy, secure and safe.

Initially ECM was born in response to the tragic outcome of Victoria Climbié's short life. As an abused, neglected child she was perhaps an example of someone who was at their *most* vulnerable. But she wasn't hidden away; the authorities knew about her and some of her health and social circumstances. The issue was, the authorities knew little or nothing more about Victoria at the end of her life than they did when she was alive, *despite* her being referred to four social service departments, two housing authorities, two child protection teams and a specialist centre managed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government 2003b, page 3).

Victoria died in bizarre captivity at the hands of her carers, the awful details of which can be read in the findings of the Laming Inquiry. What failed Victoria was the "gross failure of the system" (ibid. page 4).

Victoria was at the extreme end of the deprivation spectrum. The ECM agenda, of necessity, addresses those issues that led to her untimely death. These included the failure by the agencies to intervene early enough, their failure to share information, the absence of anyone with a strong sense of accountability, poor management and a lack of effective training for the people working for the agencies.

But the agenda also goes further, to address the reduced life chances of all those children and young people who are victims of impoverished circumstances.

"On many fronts - including low income, the gap in achievement between different socio-economic classes, and the number of children who are the victims of crime – we need to do more to catch up with other countries.... Even

at 22 months, there is a big gap between the development of children from low and high socio-economic groups.” (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Treasury 2003c, pp 6 and 23.) Therefore if they are significantly deprived, children are excluded from having an equal opportunity in life from as early as two years old.

### **1.5.1.The aims of Every Child Matters.**

When consulted, young people and their families responded to the government’s stated aims (above) by listing those outcomes that mattered the most to them, as children and young people. These outcomes were:

1. being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health;
2. staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect;
3. enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood;
4. making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour;
5. economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

The main proposals of the Every Child Matters Green Paper (Her Majesty’s Treasury, 2003c, p. 7) were to “build on the progress already made (in the areas of the five outcomes, above) by focusing action on four main areas”:

- supporting parents and carers;
- early intervention and effective protection (of children and young people);
- accountability and integration – locally, regionally and nationally;
- workforce reform.

The interviews for this research were conducted from 2007 – 2009, some four years after these initial Green Paper proposals were made. I hoped that this would have afforded sufficient time for the ECM/YM policies and proposals to begin to take effect in the provision of welfare services for children, young people and their families. The examples below, taken from some of the interviews transcripts, show that progress in improving the five ECM outcomes for the young people concerned had been variable.

**Example 1.** *“The full care order means that he is now staying with his grandmother – but the LA do not think she is suitable either – so [YPA] cannot access his social benefits because he is the subject of a full care order. As a consequence he steals to get money”.*

Transcript, YPA, p.1. Research study(1).

**Example 2.** *“There’s one young man in one of the children’s homes who’s been there for a substantial number of months, he’s spent Year 10 in the PRU and he and the Head Teacher clashed. I used to spend every other day there intervening and he was getting excluded as fast as he walked back through the door”.* Transcript LAD, p. 22. Research study(1).

**Example 3.** *“I think it was Year 8. I went to Cawton PRU (Pupil Referral Unit). I got kicked out of that because I kept running away from it. Then I went to Barridge PRU and then ran away from that so I wasn’t allowed to go back”.*

Transcript, Aiden, p.2. Research study(2).

These quotations are taken from the accounts of the experiences of three vulnerable young people whom I interviewed in the research studies for this thesis. Each of them had been excluded permanently from school at a young age and this contributed to the high level of vulnerability they were experiencing

at the time of the interviews. Each of them was unable to behave within the defined boundaries of the classroom/school and because of this, over time, they became prey to (then the victims of) the risk of being left out, or barred, from school; a world they were unable to access because of their personal circumstances and home backgrounds. This profile was typical of almost all the young people/young adults I interviewed in both research studies; for each of them, their personal circumstances had conspired to render them vulnerable at particular times in their young lives and each of them had a similar story to tell. These were stories of social exclusion, how it happens and its outcomes. Each of the young people in Examples 1 – 3 had endured extreme chaos and unhappiness at home, (violence, parental mental health issues or alcohol/drug addiction - often all at the same time), difficulties with their own behavioural issues, exclusion from school, and then they went on to commit criminal offences.

For those children and young people who are disaffected, angry and unloved, school really can be another world. Their experiences at home make them “cynical, unable to imagine or conceive” the ethos of a school that strives to engender a “normal, day-to-day world of affection, stability, hope for the future, recognition of talent, realizable ambition, aspiration social confidence...”

(Clough, 2005, p.89.)

ECM clearly sets out the government’s aims to reduce the effect of such backgrounds on the achievement gap that exists for children and young people, across the socio-economic spectrum.

## **1.6. Writing for different audiences.**

The initiative of ECM was introduced (through the Green Paper) as a discussion paper, although it can be said that many people at the time (including Ofsted inspectors) viewed ECM as a report, or a “full-blown, complete treatise[s], with graphs, diagrams and case studies already carried out to offer supporting evidence for what is being put forward” (Parker 2003, p100). Whilst it was never intended to be an academic paper, it had wide reaching outcomes in government legislation that are reflected in the Children Act of 2004 (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Government, 2004c Part 2). The managers and the professional workers who are expected to deliver the aims of ECM/YM will no doubt perceive this initiative from a range of different viewpoints, which will influence their interpretation of it and the way they implement the changes it espouses. Welfare professionals will internalise their own responses to the legislation and government initiatives that provide the landscape for their work with children and young people. For example, Childline considers its successful work to be due in no small part to the fact that their counsellors make it a priority, at the outset, to act upon what children and young people say within a bond of total confidentiality .The analysis of evidence from my two Research Studies will generate questions to do with this aspect of interpretation, not the least of which will be to challenge whether the ECM programme is reality or rhetoric.

## 1.7. Where is the Every Child Matters agenda making a difference?

The findings of the (first) Laming Inquiry (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government 2003b) indicated an urgent need to ensure earlier intervention, the sharing of information about children and young people across the different care agencies and for someone to be ultimately accountable.

In his recommendations, Lord Laming said:

*"....the greatest failure rests with the managers and senior members of the authorities.... It is significant that while a number of junior staff....were suspended and faced disciplinary action....some of their most senior officers were being appointed to other, presumably better paid jobs. This is not an example of managerial accountability that impresses me much." (ibid. page 5.)*

*"....In the future, those who occupy the senior positions in the public sector must be required to account for any failure to protect vulnerable children from ....exploitation....Time and again it was dispiriting to listen to the 'buck passing' form those who attempted to justify their positions....I hope those in leadership posts will examine their responsibilities before looking more widely" (ibid. p.6)*

An important issue within Lord Laming's recommendations is *accountability*.

Whilst he is referring to the deplorable lack of accountability at managerial and senior level, what interests me is the slightly different question: Can the

agencies (ie the professionals “on the ground”) of the children’s workforce alone address or replace the inequality that has created the achievement gap?

Indeed, can social/welfare policies alone address this inequality? Is a heightened awareness of the need to be *accountable* for the care and education of children and young people perforce going to make an improvement to the quality of provision? Accountability alone will not necessarily improve the outcomes of the work carried out by the welfare agencies. It may actually skew professionals’ approaches to their work and make them focus more on the bureaucracy of targets, performance indicators and the more desk-based aspects of their work, rather than the complex context of the “child welfare paradigm” (Broadhurst et al. 2007). The main aims of this thesis were to generate data and research findings that would provide evidence with which to probe the above questions further.

## **1.8. The context for research into Every Child Matters.**

*“One of the key failings was the inability of Humberside Police and Social Services to identify Huntley’s behaviour remotely soon enough. That was because....Social Services failed to share information effectively with the Police”. (Great Britain. House of Commons 2004e, 2004, p.3.)*

The government says that integrating the services will be a key factor in improving the life opportunities of those children and young people most at risk of educational failure (and indeed of all children.) “Overall this country is still one where life chances are unequal. This damages not only those born into disadvantage, but our society as a whole.” (Her Majesty’s Treasury, 2004, p.6.)

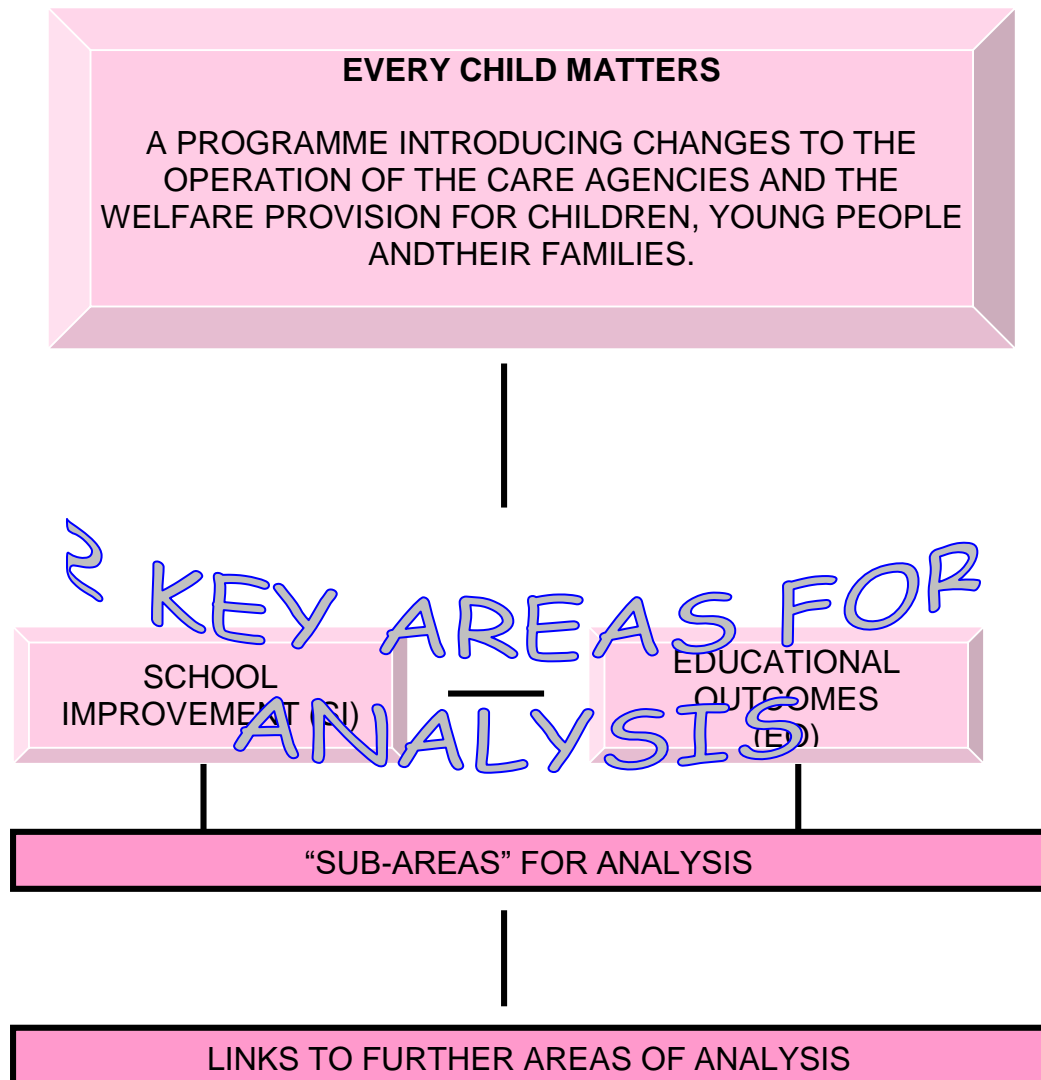


Within the new, inclusive climate of ECM two significant areas for consideration emerge:

1. The overarching area of Integrated Services (IS.) Within this area, all the agencies – education, health, social services and youth justice – are viewed as integrated aspects of welfare provision.
2. Educational Outcomes (EO.) These are to do with the performance of children and young people in tests and examinations. The ECM agenda aims to bridge the achievement gap that exists between the performance of children and young people across the socio-economic spectrum.

From these two overarching areas of analysis will come a number of “sub-areas” and further points of linkage, which will be explored in closer detail in the research methodology. See Diagram 1.1: overarching areas for analysis, Every Child Matters.

**Diagram 1.1: Overarching areas for analysis, Every Child Matters.**



### **1.8.1.A comparison of terms.**

Another, (at the time) recent government initiative was *a/so* intended to improve the provision of and educational prospects for children and young people. In October 2005 the government produced a White Paper “Higher Standards,

Better Schools for All” (Great Britain. DfES, 2005a). The chief objective of the stated aims of this document is to promote the greater independence and autonomy of schools. The main thrust of the changes proposed is for schools to help pupils strive for higher standards. This initiative is urging schools to raise the standards of their pupils’ performances, in other words their *attainment*. In contrast, the ECM agenda/initiative is concerned with implementing improvements to the *achievement* of children and young people.

These two initiatives could be in danger of militating against one another because there is a significant difference between the meaning of *achievement* and *attainment*:

**Attainment:** “The judgement on attainment is made in relation to national standards and is judged in comparison to all schools (Great Britain. Ofsted, 2009a).

**Achievement:** is concerned with how well a pupil performs according to his/her own innate ability; whether they are being extended as far as possible. Are they achieving their full potential? If the main focus in a school is on improving achievement, there is a real possibility that *standards* might remain unchanged, or may not rise significantly. This is because the majority of resources will be directed towards a focus on inclusion, or addressing the underlying issues that *cause* pupils to fail or underachieve. (I alluded to these above, when discussing pupils who were at risk of exclusion.) Similarly, an intensive focus on raising standards may cause many of the more vulnerable pupils to founder or go to pieces under the pressure to perform at a higher level. The time and resources given to a drive for *achievement* may outweigh those given to attainment, and vice versa.

From research conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA) an admissions officer was quoted as observing: “if schools wished to reach the top of the league table, by definition you have to keep to a minimum the number of pupils with statements of SEN in the school. This constitutes a blatant inconsistency because schools performing well on the inclusion front were less likely to reap dividends in attainment terms. Another source said this was “schizophrenic” & the government should decide which agenda they were working to” (Willkin et al. 2005).

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have discussed the research aim and questions for this thesis and outlined my personal values and beliefs about the research and how these contributed to the choices I made about aspects of research design and data analysis. I have outlined the rationale for the research and the development of the initial proposal across two main research questions or foci.

I have briefly explained the intended readership for my research and described the Every Child Matters agenda; the reasons for its introduction; my reasons for choosing to research in this area, and an initial identification of the main categories. I also outline the structure of my research, which evolved over time, to enable the reader to trace its underlying coherence as initial findings gave rise to further related questions.

It is my intention that the areas I shall be looking at through the research studies will be equally divided between the care agencies of education, health, social services and youth justice.)

In Chapter 2 the literature related to the ECM/YM programmes is critically evaluated and scrutinised with the aim of identifying issues that will contribute to

a conceptual framework, which will underpin the design of the first research study and provide me with a context within which to analyse the data. This will build on the start I have made in this chapter towards identifying some of the main issues, including the two overarching areas for analysis, school improvement and integrated services.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW.**

#### **2.1. The starting point.**

At the outset of writing this thesis, the focus of my proposal for this research project for my PhD was:

*To explore the impact of the ECM programme on professional practice across the agencies of education, health, social services and youth justice.*

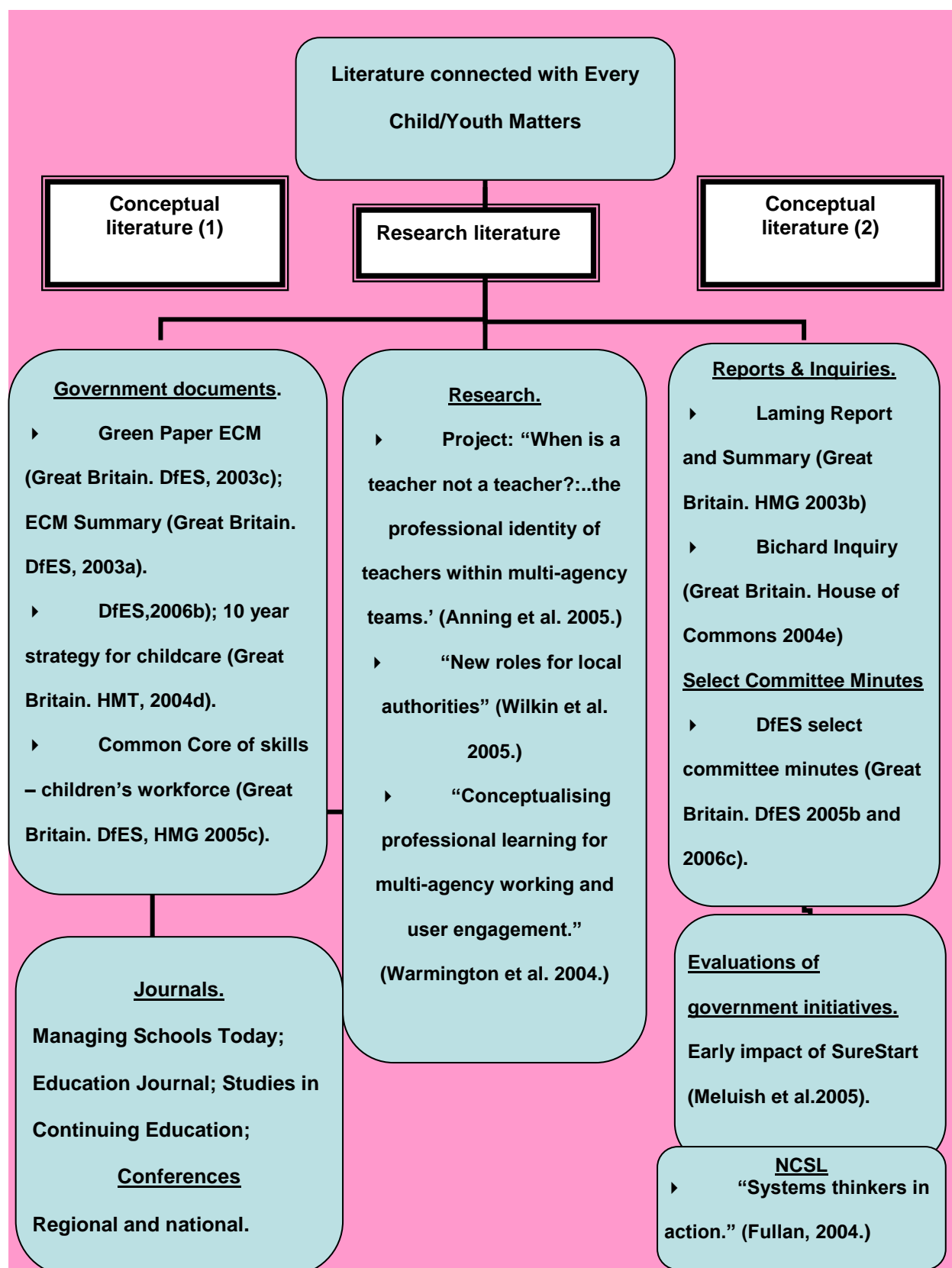
##### **2.1.1. Literature sources.**

My reading of relevant literature for this project stemmed from a series of initial literature searches using search terms such as “every child matters.” This search produced a number of relevant sources that comprised government documentation, DfES select committee meeting minutes and articles in scholarly and practitioner journals. Further searches of electronic resources produced sources such as recent research projects and reviews of research carried out in relevant areas of my chosen field of study. I have reviewed and analysed research projects (Robinson et al. 2004, Wilkin et al. 2005) and a review of research conducted into one of these key areas, integrated services (Warmington et al. 2004a). The second of these papers focuses on the concept of integrated services from a particular viewpoint, the conceptualisation of professional learning and knowledge creation and professional identity. The first (Wilkin et al. 2005,) considers two critical features of the creation of an

integrated services model: the role of the local authority and the contribution made by schools.

These research papers, amongst others, and their findings fall into two categories of literature. *Conceptual literature*: this is written by experts and “gives theories, ideas and opinions and is published in the form of books, articles and papers.” *Research literature*: this comprises reviews, reports and the findings of research, “often presented in the form of papers and reports” (Walliman, 2005 p.32). In Diagram 2.1, Overview of literature reviewed, I show an outline of the range of literature I reviewed for the project, informed my thinking and conceptualising for the first research study.

Diagram 2.1, Overview of literature reviewed.





Within this diagram, I have specified two categories of conceptual literature. This has been done to show the different nature of the sources. In category 1, I have included those sources that reflect the opinions and thinking of experts and professionals through journal articles, evaluations of initiatives to do with the ECM/YM programme, DfES Select Committee minutes and conferences I have attended. These different sources tend to be concerned with evaluating and responding to professional practice across the different agencies, offering a perspective grounded in different outcomes of the ECM/YM programme. Category 2 contains the prescriptive, policy-making documents produced by the government and literature to do with analysis of systems that underpin change relevant aspects such as leadership and management.

### **2.1.2. Conceptual literature (1).**

- a) Incorporated within this category are the articles written in journals by experts (authorities and professionals) on particular aspects within the ECM agenda. Such articles as I have sourced are mostly written in scholarly journals rather than books. I surmise the reason for this is that because the ECM agenda was introduced comparatively recently (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Treasury 2003c), there has been no time yet for books to be written. Therefore at the time of writing, the most accessible medium for voicing "opinions theories, ideas and opinions" was to be found in journals, academic and professional. The authors of the articles included educational professionals working either as senior editors or in high office in professional associations and research teams, attached to universities or research institutes. The concepts and issues I identified

from my reading of articles in this type of literature include: integrated services; educational outcomes; the achievement gap between the most and least privileged children; a common framework for assessing children's needs; the dangers of promoting an outcomes-based scheme for assessing progress with the ECM agenda and the lack of consultation with school staff or governors by the government, prior to introducing the ECM agenda. These concepts helped form a significant part of my conceptual framework for this project. There is some overlap across the key issues arising from this reading and those from the DfES select committee oral evidence (see below).

- b) The type of information I gleaned from conferences was different again. Rather than formalised handouts or slides I found the personal viewpoints and commentaries of speakers far more useful, because these reflected a more realistic (and critical) perspective of ECM issues. (However, there is a difficulty in citing these references when conferences do not publish the speakers' presentations and/or the papers themselves are not printed in journals).
- c) The literature of Government documents informing developments within the ECM agenda is increasing all the time. Much of my writing in the first chapter draws on the initial key publications that introduced ECM, (for example, Great Britain. DfES 2004a, 2004b and 2006a) from which issues emerged that could represent potential conflict, such as that arising from a comparison of the government's standards agenda (Great Britain, DfES, 2005a) with the principles of inclusion enshrined in most of the early ECM documentation (Great Britain. HM Treasury, 2003c).

### 2.1.3. Conceptual literature (2).

- a) Other sources of literature in this category comprise the recorded oral evidence of the meetings of the Department for Education and Skills Select Committee; publications by the government pertaining to the ECM agenda; publications from the DfES Innovation Unit and notes and input from academic conferences (Great Britain. House of Commons, 2006c). The nature of the information found in the minutes of these meetings is very interesting to me, because it does not fall neatly into the category of either conceptual or research literature. The information I have gleaned from this particular source is conceptual, because it contains the ideas, opinions and theories of “experts.” However, the evidence also incorporates information that is allied to elements of critical thinking (Walliman et al. 2005, pp. 76 - 77). This is evident in the arguments constructed around the questions and answers. The probing of assumptions by the committee opens out many aspects of the wider context of Every Child Matters. The minutes from the meeting held in 2006 reflect lines of very rigorous questioning (by the committee and chairman) of the “experts” (advisers to the government across the range of children’s services, health and education.) Consequently, when reading this evidence, a degree of polarisation is discernible. The answers and responses of the government experts mostly reflect their commitment to presenting the picture they feel they *should* extol in their advisory roles. In direct contrast, the lines of questioning and discussion pursued by the chairman and committee are probing, insistent and broach sensitive or difficult areas within the ECM agenda. These areas

have informed the construction of my conceptual framework for this research project (see Chapter 2) and helped me to identify further, significant issues for analysis such as: levels of resourcing; barriers to school improvement; the lack of duty on schools (and GPs) within the Children Act; data management and information sharing; conflict between the government's stance on standards and the inclusive agenda of ECM; the development of integrated services across the agencies and ways of measuring the improvements in children's achievement since the introduction of ECM.

The more sensitive, difficult areas probed during these select committee meetings have provided me with a range of wider considerations that proved useful for the design of the first research study. Areas that have been of particular interest to me include discussion about the need to develop structures and systems across the different agencies *in parallel*; the judgements made about the degree of joint/multi-agency working that derive from outcomes (such as fewer exclusions, improved examination and test results; Ofsted reports; and a decline in reported incidents of bullying); the lack of a common focus within the system (ie across the agencies) on children's educational achievement.

***What follows are examples of items taken from an appraisal of minutes from the DfES Select Committee (Great Britain. House of Commons, 2006c), which might suggest other, wider considerations for research.***

### **Example 2.1.**

**Chief advisor to the government, children and young people's services**

**(C&YPS):** "Sure Start, people say it has changed their lives. 86% of cases show good child outcomes. However, in the seven years Sure Start has been running, a significant minority of people – through community development approaches - did not come along. This is because the community development approach can be exclusive. Results showed differences between health-led programmes, they are better than we think at reaching people. This is because health is the universal service for the under 3's.

**Committee member:** "The education system focuses on the supply side rather than the demand side. This is why we miss those people we need to reach the most. How do we....get parents to want more from the system"?

These comments and questions highlight significant aspects on/related to how the welfare agencies provide support for those children and families who are in the most need, (those to whom the aims of the ECM programme, are addressed) and for whom narrowing the achievement and life opportunity gap that exists between the less privileged and those who are better off is critical. The point made by the Chief Advisor (C&YPS) draws attention to evidence of the disparity between the effectiveness of the provision of health services and the provision of education. The points being made are that support for children and families is better targeted (and taken up) where it is related to health needs. This is because the health agencies are well placed to identify families' holistic needs as a result of their ongoing contact with families throughout pregnancy,

birth and post natal care. This suggests that other, related problems such as housing, economic, drugs and mental health issues can be identified and addressed (or referred) by the health agencies because they are already in regular contact with the families. This “all round” support is not apparent in the provision of education. The committee member for education quoted in Example 1 is saying that education is more supply driven than demand driven. This “supply led,” approach to education reflects the traditional approach of welfare provision before the “third way” and “new right” forms of governance of the 1980’s and 1990’s, which I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 5. This traditional approach to welfare provision was based on the “conceptualisation of needs and service provision,” in terms of “professional group interests and bureaucratic boundaries” (Bagley et al. 2004, p.596) rather than through a needs-led approach. For the purpose of my research, this concept of needs versus supply led welfare provision raised useful questions which I hoped would inform the findings from the first research study and help to further shape the direction of the final study. Do the findings point to evidence of the development of needs-led provision across the agencies and is this a result of a more effective integration of services? Or are welfare services still rooted in a supply-led paradigm (or set of elements that constitute welfare need), in which *professionals* conceptualise the needs of children and families rather than the families, who are far better able to perceive their own needs?

### **Example 2.2.**

**Chair:** “To get all key partners on board will take time because of the cultural and language differences. But we also need to see results. Without results people will become disenchanted. For example, what are the outcomes of the new extended schools, children’s centres and integrated youth support?”

**Chief advisor to the government, children and young people’s services**

**(C&YPS):** “For real changes to be universally applied we need structure and systems to change and parallel. But there has not been the luxury of doing things in sequence.

**Chief Advisor, C&YPS:** “One thing not working is that the system is not working towards (educational) attainment. The schools are, but the health system is not promoting educational achievement. You have to build the system towards the goals, not just each of the individual bits of the system.

### **Example 2.3.**

**Chair:** “Has planning and changing structures got in the way of facilitating delivery on the outcomes? Is current practice really “turning the ship?”

**Chief Advisor, C&YPS:** “You can’t turn the ship without structural changes.”

**Chair:** “Children at the ‘bottom’ have got to achieve faster if the gap between the most and least privileged is to be narrowed, because *all* the outcomes have got to be improved.”

The exchanges in Examples 2.2 and 2.3 highlight the difficulties of integrating children's services. For example short term results (the outcomes of various pilot initiatives) are being sought to reflect immediate progress, when in fact structures and systems are being developed in isolation to one another, which militates against a universal and equal application of the ECM agenda across each of the welfare agencies . Another conflict would seem to exist in that the education and health agencies do not work towards the same aims (Example 2.2). This directs discussion towards another potential conflict: how the achievement gap (between the least and the most privileged children) is to be addressed through the ECM agenda. From reading the research and conceptual literature, the issue of structure versus systems emerges as a common thread of difficulty that could constrain effective multi-agency working.

Some of the key issues raised in a report written by the Education and Skills Committee (Great Britain. DfES, 2005b), are shown in Example 2.4.



#### **Example 2.4.**

- ▶ “The committee was not convinced that workforce training needs for all in-service staff are likely to be given the necessary priority (ref paragraph 77 in body of report.)”
- ▶ “The Department of Health has said there is no ring-fenced money for training.”
- ▶ “The government has said repeatedly that it expects improvements to services to be largely resourced from mainstream non-ring fenced funding budgets and saving derived from more integrated...services. Witnesses say this will be difficult to achieve in practice. Workforce development (INSET) is of critical importance but likely to be resource intensive. ...Minimal funding is being provided directly for this purpose.”

The discussions about funding (Example 2.4) resonate with issues that arise in Section 2.1.4. below, which are connected with the overall issue of government funding (or lack of it) and its significance to the range, extent and depth of training required to create effective multi-agency working.

- b) Another aspect of this category of conceptual literature is the range of governmental reports written in response to tragedies that occur to children that prompt national scrutiny/reform of child protection procedures, such as the Laming (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government, 2003b) and Bichard (Great Britain. House of Commons, 2004e) Inquiries and Reports. These two reports provided me with useful

categories for consideration that stemmed from their recommendations and findings, which included aspects of legislation, the structure of the agencies concerned and the shortfalls in management, training and accountability cited as contributory factors to the tragedies that prompted the initial inquiries (the death of Victoria Climbié and the Soham murders, which were the subject of the Bichard Inquiry).

- c) The literature I read from the National College for School Leaders, NCSL, (Fullan, 2004) provided me with another source of information that also straddled the categories of research and conceptual literature. These writings explored the role of systems and systems thinking in the overall process of managing change within education, or “the systemic nature of modern educational leadership.” The issues arising from this area of reading contributed to the “links to further analysis” in my conceptual framework, providing me with other possible areas for consideration in tandem with the findings from my first research study, which in turn might also direct my thinking for my final research study. These areas provoked questions and further issues that resonated with concepts I had already identified from research literature and included: the impact of power relations in managing change; the need for a “collective identity,” “people are the solution and the problem.”
- d) I also worked with a further source of conceptual literature in the form of national evaluations of specific government initiatives that arose out of the aims of the ECM agenda. These included the evaluation of the Extended Schools Pathfinder Project (Cummins et al. 2004) and the evaluation of the Early Impacts of Sure Start Local Programmes in

Children and Families (Meluish et al. 2005). The bodies that carried out these particular evaluations differ slightly in their constitution. One comprises university researchers from two university departments working with the Education Policy and Evaluation unit of another university, (Cummins et al. 2004). The other, (Meluish et al. 2005), which was based at the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, University of London. Rather than bringing out emerging concepts, these evaluations raised other sorts of relevant aspects, for example: re-defining terms; identifying advantages and value for money; evidence to support (or otherwise) the success of particular aims of the projects and suggestions for evaluating the longer term benefits of the projects in contrast to the more recent, “quick hit” benefits that have been more readily identifiable (explained as “a shift from evaluation-for accountability to evaluation-for-learning and development” (Cummins et al. 2004, p 51.) This type of information – whilst not informing my thinking about the structure and scope of the research project – provided me with critical issues for consideration at the later stages of my research.

#### **2.1.4. Research literature.**

I sourced literature in this category through electronic searches that directed me to scholarly and research journals that are about/related/connected to education and research (see Diagram 1.) Examples of the research papers I have read explore issues connected with professionals working within multi-agency (integrated services) teams and the new roles for local authorities in education. These areas of research have provided me with the two key, overarching areas

for analysis that are identified in my conceptual framework, (educational outcomes and integrated services). Secondly, I see the complex issues involved with the development of multi-agency teams and the new role of local authorities as possible, underlying factors that will determine the successful (or otherwise) implementation of the Every Child/Youth Matters agenda. If the professionals concerned are not effectively trained and genuinely encouraged to develop a truly integrated way of working for children and young people, then the government's stated aims and far-reaching objectives of the programme will not be realised. The following are two examples of research literature that I evaluated.

**a) “Multi-agency teams working in services for children”.**

The findings of the research project (Robinson et al. 2005) were of interest because they discuss conceptual tools that were to prove very useful to me during the analysis of my findings from the first research study. (They also helped direct my thinking towards the area of research for my second study). The key issues arising from my review of this particular research project are outlined in Example 2.5, Findings from research, Robinson et al. 2005.

### **Example 2.5. Findings from research, Robinson et al. 2005.**

**Findings 1.** *The dilemmas of co-participation.* Professionals in multi-agency teams face complex procedural dilemmas in pooling or re-combining their expertise in practice. Research showed that professionals brought conflicting forms of knowledge to the shared activities.

**Findings 2.** The opportunities offered for individuals to train in specialist knowledge and expertise created dilemmas. These occurred for some teachers who were professionally supervised outside their teams. Their understanding of their professional development needs clashed with their supervisor's.

**Findings 3.** Practical implications of the findings. Resolution (of these dilemmas) was achieved through specific activities that facilitated professional knowledge exchange validated by: *setting aside time for team building and open discussion; establishing joint activities for members from different agencies and developing shared protocols and documentation that provided ongoing support & training for staff undergoing changes in work practices.*

#### **Conclusions.**

"Important theoretical issues are also raised by our findings." These included the dilemmas faced by professionals working in multi-agency teams and involved reconciling the need to belong to a new identity with retaining past identities and values. This gives rise to the need for multi agency work to "illuminate how professional identity is discursively grounded and shaped" (Anning et al. p.186) and the need for team members to seek a common basis for practice in their core professional values.

The findings from this research paper are associated with the complexities and dilemmas of multi-agency working, such as pooling expertise in practice and conflicts of understanding different professional needs (across the different agencies). They also acknowledge of the scale of difficulty encountered when attempting to merge people's different professional identities and values into a multi-agency team of practitioners. These difficulties contributed to the dilemmas experienced by the agency professionals and highlighted the need for the development of a common basis of core professional values. These concepts contributed directly to the structuring of the conceptual framework for the first research study, which is explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

**b) “Conceptualising professional learning for multi-agency working and user engagement.”**

This research paper was written by a team from Birmingham University (Warmington et al. 2004a). It “outlines a theoretical framework for investigating and enhancing the learning processes and outcomes of interagency practice aimed at engaging and supporting at-risk children and their families”. The abstract for the paper suggests that the “current policy on ‘joined-up’ working for social inclusion is running ahead of the conceptualisations of interagency collaboration and learning required to effect new forms of practice” (ibid p.1). I found this interesting because in my practical, professional experience this is similar to the view held by many teachers and managers from within local authorities; the vision for multi-agency, integrated welfare services espoused in government documentation and the literature of ECM/YM is a long way ahead of the reality experienced by the front line agency professionals.

The research paper is derived from a literature review that contributed to the formation of an ESRC funded research study, (as part of its Teaching and Learning Research Programme) entitled “Learning in and for Interagency Working” (LIW). Through analysing the key issues discussed in the paper I hoped to be able to extract terminology and definitions of concepts that would inform the research design of my first research study. An example of a set of definitions from this research paper is presented in Table 2.1, definitions of multi agency working. These were to prove useful when I structured the research questions for the first study and helped me to explore, within the interviews, some of the aspects related to the implementation (or not) of multi agency of structures and systems within the different agencies and local authorities.

**Table 2.1 definitions of multi agency working.**

Term	Working definition
Interagency working	Involving more than one agency, working together in a planned and formal way, at strategic or operational way.
Multi-agency working	Implying more than one agency working with a client, but not necessarily jointly. May be prompted by joint planning or simply be a form of replication – the result of a lack of proper interagency co-ordination.
Joined-up working	Working, policy or thinking referring to deliberately conceptualised and co-ordinated planning that takes account of multiple policies and varying agency practices.

The paper includes a critical analysis of literature that comprised a “review of research on interagency and cross professional collaboration” (ibid, p. 3) and this had a significant impact on the structure and purpose of my writing for this thesis. The critical analysis questions the rigour of government-driven evaluations (of government initiatives) conducted by bodies such as the Audit Commission, because they treat “cross-collaboration as a given element, an unproblematic practice....that rests on ‘non-conflictual’ models of collaboration” (ibid, 2004a, p.4). This was my first experience of literature that is categorised as critical social policy, in which government and policy and processes are questioned and argued within the context of their outcomes. For the purposes of this doctoral research the context is welfare provision and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society; the outcomes are the visible results

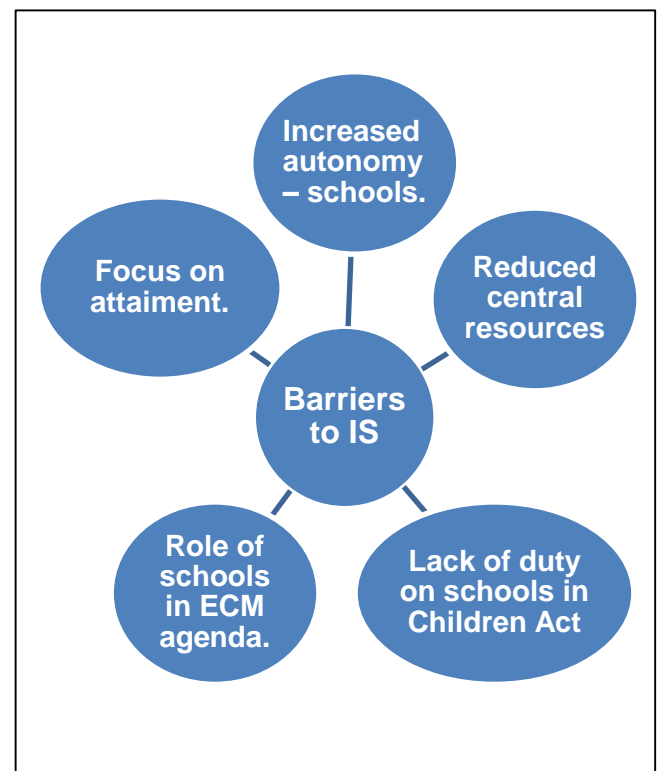
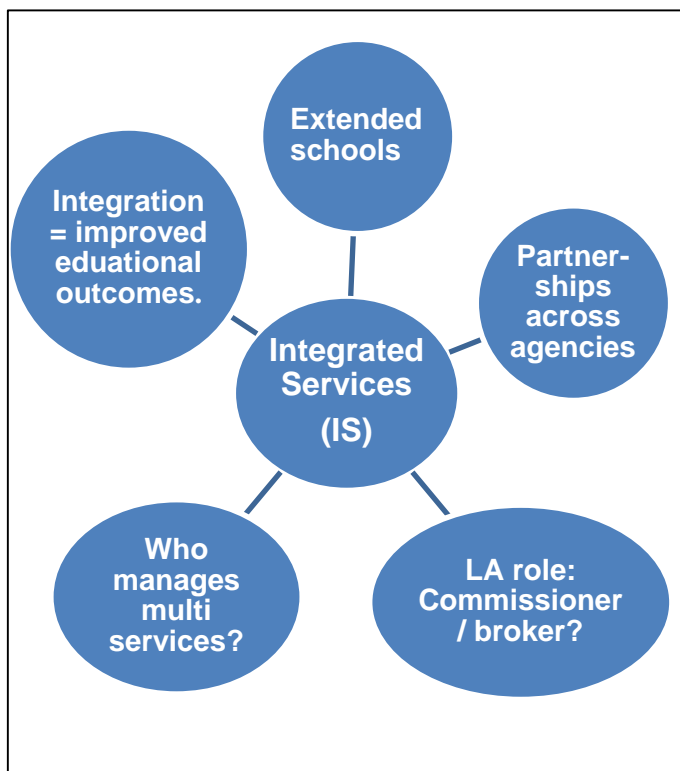
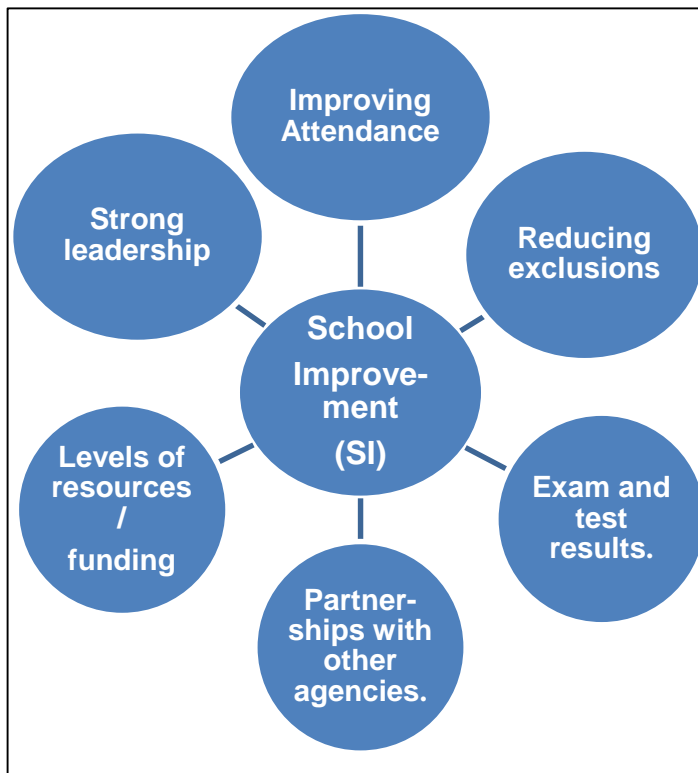


(the dilemmas, difficulties and conflicts) of implementing the policies of the ECM/YM agenda. The task of joining up a range of welfare services as complex and different as health, education, social services and youth justice presents the need to combine/redefine professional values, identities and codes of practice (Robinson et al. 2005). Warmington et al.(2004a) criticise those studies that, whilst they do problematise interagency working they, notwithstanding, “adopt a narrowly systemic approach” in reviewing interagency working initiatives and which tend to focus on “managerial or technological issues as barriers to effective collaboration” (ibid p4). Adopting such a mechanistic approach to a review of interagency working initiatives, they argue, is to ignore some of the more significant and complex issues that come into play, such as professional identity and values. These ‘higher order’ issues are referred to as contributing to the difficulties endemic in managing the change that will create more closely integrated services: “to get all key partners on board will take time because of the cultural and language differences” (Great Britain. House of Commons, 2006c).The nature of these difficulties transcends those that are merely managerial or technological and they reflect the complexity and range of issues that need to be taken into account in any review of multi-agency working. Such narrow, mechanistic approaches operate within conceptual frameworks in which a “minimal emphasis is placed upon the need for agencies to *learn* interagency working” or for the analyses of interagency working as a learning process” (Warmington et al. p.4). Within the context of the ECM/YM programmes interagency working is a significant aim and probably one of the most complex and difficult to achieve, as shown above in Example 2.5. Findings from research, Robinson et al. 2005.

**c) New roles for local authorities in education: opportunities and challenges (LGA research programme.)**

The findings in this report came from research conducted across a sample of five local authorities. The structures of the authorities included unitary, county and metropolitan and they were located around the country (Wilkin et al. 2005). Two of the main areas for this research were school improvement and integrated services. I include both of these categories as core concepts within my conceptual framework, which is examined further in the next chapter. (In the event, I chose to re-phrase 'school improvement' as 'educational outcomes', in order to avoid confusion with the initiative being delivered to schools, at the time of writing, through the national School Improvement Programme). This research paper examines the role of the local authorities in school improvement, the schools' contributions to the integration of services for children and young people, barriers to school improvement work and the impact of integrated services on educational outcomes. In my analysis of the paper, I tried to draw out those issues that I thought would be of most use to my own research. These are shown in Diagram 2.2, Key Issues for Research, after Wilkin et al. 2005. It can be seen that many of the issues shown in this diagram also arose in discussions arising in the oral evidence of the DfES Select Committee minutes, referred to earlier.

**Diagram 2.2, Key Issues for Research – (after Wilkin et al. 2005)**



## **Summary.**

In this chapter I have examined the different categories of literature within the literature review for the first research study, which incorporate two types of conceptual literature and the category of research literature. I discuss the key features of the different types of literature and the ways in which these have informed my thinking and the process of structuring the main elements of a conceptual framework for the research study, which I explore more fully in the next chapter. Looking ahead, this analysis and appraisal of the literature helps to substantiate my decisions to include specific issues within the conceptual framework and to develop other areas where further research might (or might not) prove productive to the first research study).

In the next chapter I explain the research design of the first research study and show the structure and rationale of the conceptual framework. I also discuss the details and difficulties of implementing my chosen research model, drawing further on the literature and my own practical experiences from the early stages of making contacts within local authorities to the setting up of the interviews.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **3. Methodology.**

#### **3.1 Research design.**

##### **Foreword.**

The focus of this chapter is my first Research Study, which began its existence in my initial planning as a Pilot Study. At that time, I was working to my original proposal for this thesis, which was “to examine the impact of the ECM programme on professional practice across the different welfare agencies”. To this end, I envisaged that through a Pilot Study I would capture data that would indicate an overall trend or pattern, which would indicate areas of successful and not so successful practice. The findings from the analysis of this research data could then be used to structure a more coherent and sharply focused final research study, which would explore the significant, emerging issues from the first research study. “Pilot”, by its very title implies that the study would be a guide or “steer” to test the waters of the research field before embarking on a particular research route or another for a final study. In the event, the analysis of my findings from the first research study provided me with three very clear foci, each of which would have benefited equally from further, in depth research. In a PhD study of this size I could not hope to embark on such large scale research work and so rather than embarking on a final study, suggested by the initial idea of the Pilot, the findings inspired me to read and analyse a body of literature that was located in a different paradigm to the first literature review. Once I had embarked on this, my own thinking about and conceptualisation of the overall research thesis inclined me towards a different research focus and an

amended/additional title for my research proposal. I began to see that I was in the process of structuring a second research study, rather than following a route of research that had been determined by a trial run or “Pilot” study. Indeed, the Pilot study was now to be viewed as simply the first research study.

Therefore, this chapter sets out the methodology for Part 1 of my research thesis and focuses on what I have chosen to call Research Study 1, (rather than a Pilot Study). Part 2 of the thesis will comprise the chapters that relate to the methodology, conceptual framework and analysis of Research Study 2.

### **Why two research studies?**

Prior to the first research study, I did not know which aspects within professional practice would emerge as significant. I had originally intended that the data/findings from the first study would guide me in investigating more deeply the issues that had emerged as problematic. For the first research study, I focused on my own concerns and thinking about ECM/YM, which had evolved from the literature review and my professional experience. Therefore the aims of the first research study were to test out these ideas and concepts and explore their implications. From the data analysis I inducted three findings and these directed me towards a further literature review, which encouraged me to be more analytical and to adopt a more critical approach towards the underpinning factors that gave rise to the ECM/YM programme for change. The outcome of this was a shift in emphasis, which re-directed my research focus towards one of social policy.

Diagram 3.1, Simple Research model, shows the outline of this process of thinking. After the first study, the findings guided me through this process again – the iterative nature of the model – helping me to develop a closer, more concentrated focus for the second research study. The nature of the information I sourced through my research derived from people's subjective accounts of their own experiences and responses to questions, which reflected their particular perspectives as workers, managers and recipients of the ECM/YM agenda. Maxwell (1996, p.45) talks about there being a particular use of a Research Study 1 that is to do with “generating an understanding of the concepts and theories held by the people you are studying.” This refers to interpretation, and my hopes for the two research studies were that the respondents' answers to my questions would provide me with insights into understanding the different perspectives that inform the respondents' views and “stories”. These issues are discussed in more detail in, Chapter 7.

The framework of my research design for this Research Study is structured to “locate the researcher in the empirical world, and connect the questions to data” (Punch 1998, p.6). The essential idea is to use observable, real-world (empirical) evidence and information as the way of developing and/or testing ideas. For my purposes, I shall be researching a new, significant area of educational legislation for which I need as full a range of observed evidence as possible, which reflects the different perspectives of both the people that work across the ECM agencies and those who are the recipients, (the children, young people and their parents and carers).

Interview questions will be open-ended, encouraging the respondents to give answers that are constructed in their own terms and – most importantly – based

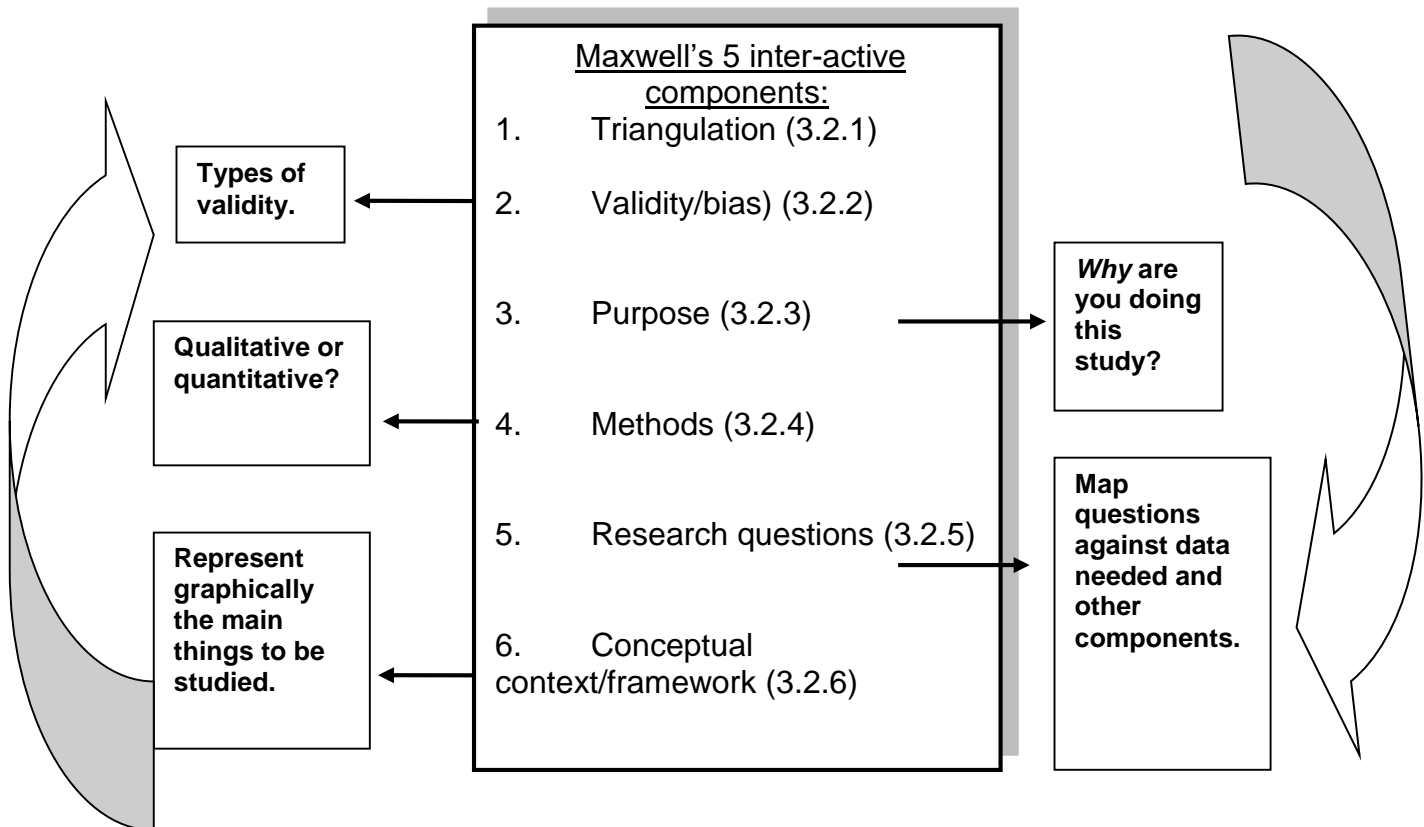
on their particular perspective. As a consequence, the components of my research design therefore need to be interactive and the overall process iterative. I need a research design model that will allow me to re-visit evidence and make connections that will eventually help me to shape and direct more in-depth research at a later stage (after the Research Study 1).

Diagram 3.1, Simple research model, shows an outline of my basic research design and process (Maxwell 1996, p.5). This model provides a good match to my research needs. The 5 inter-active components provided me with the basis of an outline structure for this chapter, and the questions located around the outside of the model stimulated a more critical approach to my discussion of the methodology I was using. The central inter-active components of the diagram are discussed in detail in the next section.



**Diagram 3.1, Simple research model.**

**Iterative process**



**Iterative process**

## **3.2 Validity and Reliability.**

### **3.2.1 Triangulation.**

For the findings of this research project to be accepted as valid, I need a secure grounding for my methods and analysis of the evidence/data. If I collect data from people in roles at similar levels (all managerial, say, or only professional who work at the point of delivery of services) the data will be rooted in similar points of view, which will automatically rule out other plausible alternatives (Maxwell 1996.) Such a narrow field of respondents will present a potential threat to the validity of the data. To avoid as many of these threats as I can, my selection of respondents will need to allow for a range of different roles, different levels of seniority and they should be selected from across the different care agencies involved in ECM.

The readers of this research will be from many different areas of work and have different responsibilities for and interests in children, young people and their families. Therefore they will read this research project from their own, different perspectives. These different perspectives may prevent them from accessing to the full, the findings of the project, or to question their validity. Just as I will construct a way of writing, so different readers will construct their own way of reading the findings. The extent to which different readers' interpretations can vary is illustrated in an account of the ways in which a government initiative was received, in 1992, when three educationalists were appointed by the then Secretary of State for Education to review evidence about the current state of primary education "and to make recommendations about the nature of school organisation and teaching necessary for the successful implementation of the

National Curriculum (Hammersley and Scarth 1993, p.489). There were widely differing interpretations of the paper, which were “seen as the products, partly, of differing interests and partly of the different contexts the paper went through” (ibid., p.119). There was also confusion because:

- a) two of the authors stressed that what they had prepared should be seen as a *discussion paper*, the content of which should allow for a considered input from teachers and managers;
- b) the third of the three authors, (an emerging commentator on education, Chris Woodhead) regarded the paper as a definitive *report*, which should form the basis for new specifications for curriculum organisation, or as a more prescriptive document, which would “guide the inspection of school performance” (ibid., p.124).
- c) another version/interpretation was to view it as an academic paper and subject to the same tests of adequacy, making no concessions to the need to make it accessible and relevant to teachers. The people who saw it as this, criticised the paper for being not “up to standard” in terms of academic presentation.

Each of these responses presents its own threat to the validity of the initiative. In order to avoid a similar fate for this thesis, I present it as a piece of research that I hope will be sufficiently clear in its aims to avert alternative interpretations that are grounded in perspectives that are only on the periphery, or loosely wedded to the issues of my field of research. I will aim to ground my writing and research firmly in the field of the workers, managers, children, parents and young people who are the direct recipients of the ECM agenda. My findings will

be drawn from the evidence they provide me with - and not from what the legislation tells us *should* be happening.

### **3.2.2 Validity and bias.**

As I explained in Chapter 1, my own professional experience in education derives from many different roles and aspects of provision. The questions I have structured for interviews for this study are based closely on what I consider to be the key areas for analysis specifically within the ECM agenda. Through exploring different evaluations, documents, reports, minutes of select committee meetings and articles that relate to ECM, I have attempted to eliminate any bias attributable to my own experiences or opinions. I also need to allow for any effects due to reactivity, or influence I might exert on respondents as interviewer. This will be difficult, because of the nature of one-to-one interviews. Therefore I plan to present myself throughout the process predominantly as a full-time PhD student, rather than as an educationalist, or someone who might seek to impose or suggest their own interpretation of the ECM agenda to interviewees. This is in contrast to my overall standpoint, or “positionality”, for this research project which I described in Chapter 1 Section 1.2.3, in which I describe my overall standpoint as that of an educational practitioner. However, as an interviewer, I am choosing to adjust my positionality in relation to the respondents, in order to avoid imposing any sense of “authority” on our exchanges and thereby inhibiting or influencing their responses in any way.

### **3.2.3 Purpose.**

Why am I doing this research? It is said to be relatively easy to find an “unanswered, empirically answerable question to which the answer isn’t *worth*

knowing,” (Maxwell 1996, p.14.) The purposes of this research project can usefully be distinguished into three different categories Maxwell (1996. p.15,) personal, practical and research purposes. Firstly, the personal purposes are detailed in Chapter 1, where I write about my motivation for the project. Secondly, at a practical level I am carrying out the research to discover findings that will meet a need for evidence that will indicate the extent to which the ECM agenda is influencing professional practice (or not) across the agencies. These initial data, captured through the perceptions of local “actors” on the inside, will provide me with material from which I can begin to isolate, corroborate and eliminate certain themes that will be of use in the next stages of my research. Finally, the predominant research purposes of the project are implicit within the proposed Research Study 1, which comprises interviews with workers and clients across the agencies. From these I will gain an insight into what is going on and why it is happening.

### **3.2.4 Methods**

My initial research question is open-ended in its aims, which are to investigate the impact of ECM/YM on professional practice with a focus on the way the changes are affecting the prevailing cultures and structures within the relevant service areas.

Qualitative data comprises data that is not in the form of numbers. Rather than thinking about an either-or distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods, I prefer to take the viewpoint that the methods and data to be used for this research need to follow and fit with the questions I need to ask, (Punch 2000, p. 31.)

Looking beyond the qualitative versus quantitative debate, there exists a myth that regards qualitative research as “soft, unscientific, ‘touchy-feely’ messing....seeking opinion rather than facts.” (Ely et al. 1991, p. 102.) I fully agree with this viewpoint and the writers go on to state, in countering this myth, that nothing could be further from the truth. Engaging in qualitative research of the type I propose, will require well- developed observational skills, of the kind I developed when working as a schools’ inspector for Ofsted. It is perhaps appropriate to mention here that my experiences as a school inspector appear similar to the research process of recording, keeping a log and transcribing data from the interview process. I anticipate my research log bearing a resemblance to the inspection notebooks I kept in the field, where it was essential that every source of evidence was recorded, to facilitate the process of cross referencing in the event of a school questioning any of the judgements made on the standard of provision.

Throughout the interviews I propose to conduct, I see myself as a collaborator in research, working in conjunction with the people whose opinions, points of view and experiences I will be seeking to describe (Ely p.102.) Is this participatory research? Not in the strictest sense, except that I see the interviews and discussions from the Research Study 1 as research carried out *with and for* the subjects, rather than *on* or *to* them. The interviews will enable me to create the boundaries for the research as I progress and these will undoubtedly evolve in response to what I learn from the data provided by the interviewees. So the interviewees will be helping me to discover what is and is not happening within ECM/YM, through sharing their perceptions of practice across the agencies. To this extent my research in this study will be at the level

of “co-operation”, which I have grouped together with the aspect of “consultation” on the continuum model of the modes of participation, (after Truman 2001, see Diagrams 3.3a and 3.3b (see Section 3.4). Modes of research participation and outcomes: comparison between general model and this PhD research project).

The data I collect within this field of research will therefore be varied and diverse. Because it will be social research, there will be a political nature to the context, which will comprise complex aspects such as “funding, cognitive authority and power,” Punch (2005 p. 135). In order to collect data that represents this wide and complex social structure I have chosen to interview workers and managers across the care agencies. I will structure the interviews using three open-ended questions, the answers to which I anticipate being descriptive, explanatory and evaluative. I shall be focusing the questions on issues that arise from the two overarching issues – Integrated Services and Educational Outcomes (see Chapter 1, Motivation and Diagram 2). From answers to the initial questions there will arise other “sub-areas” and further points of linkage that will cover issues such as: ways in which the ECM changes are being managed across the different agencies and how these are viewed by the different stakeholders, (case workers, teachers, children and young people and parents/carers); how existing systems and structures are being adjusted to accommodate the changes; the identification of any tensions at local and national levels and people’s opinions about how effective the ECM agenda is proving in bridging the achievement gap between the most and the least privileged children and young people. Other linkages may well be concerned with the changing roles of the local authority (LA) and schools and issues to do

with training and professional development to help staff adapt effectively to the new, inclusive regime. A qualitative approach will enable me to gain an insight into participants' understanding of the *meaning* of events, situations and their own actions and responses (Maxwell 1996 p. 17.) and, I hope, help me to a better understanding of the context within which participants are working and living and the many influences that shape their actions. Through this approach I hope to identify unanticipated phenomena and influences and use these to generate key findings from the research data.

### **3.2.5 Research questions.**

#### **Connecting questions to data.**

Punch (2000 p. 28) states that “a question well asked is a question half-answered.” At the outset of my work for this project I drew up some 36 questions for my interviews. Through this process I was able to phrase the questions at a high level of specificity, which enabled me to see what data I needed to collect in order to answer the question. This was useful initially because the questions helped me to see where and in which of the care agencies I needed to look for the answers (social services, case worker etc). The questions were unambiguous, specific and also substantively relevant, meaning they were worth the investment of research effort Punch (2005 p. 46). I presented these in a data planning matrix format, to help me cross reference the concepts and issues within the conceptual framework and ensure my questions contributed to a coherent design Maxwell (1996 p. 82). However, at a later stage of my proposal I realised that although the questions were firmly connected to my chosen data indicators (the issues and concepts), even if I were to conduct say 10 interviews,



I would be presented with some 360 different answers to transcribe and analyse. This would be impractical and disproportionate to the size of the first research study. I therefore worked to pare the questions down to three very open, core questions that would encourage the respondents to talk further about their own particular circumstances and in which aspects of the issues from the original 36 questions were implicit. These questions are listed in Table 3.1, Core questions for Research Study (1) with their adaptations for agency professionals and children/young people. In the course of interviews, I hoped the core questions would evoke other, sub-areas and related links within the ECM agenda. (An example of some of the original questions is shown in Appendix, Table A1.1: original questions for research study 1).

**Table 3.1. Core questions for Research Study 1.**

<b>Questions for agency professionals</b>	<b>Questions for children/young people</b>
1. What stage are you at along the line to integration with the other services?	1. Where do you and your Mum/Dad/carer go when you need some help?
2. Is there any area in which particular progress has or has not been made?	2. Does Mum/Dad/carer ever get in touch with school about anything? Does school ever get in touch with them?
3. What support have you had? Is there any further support you would like?	3. If you've got a problem, who do you go to in school? Has this always been the case or has it changed recently?

In the Appendix, Table A 1 indicates the linkages between the original questions and the final core, three questions shown above in Table 3.1.

### **Why interviews?**

I decided that the tool best suited to my purposes of collecting primary evidence would be that of a face to face interview, as opposed to constructing a case study or a questionnaire. This is because a case study is a study of a case in detail, which provides a depth of understanding about a particular aspect/type of (research) actor. This doctoral research project is to do with an extensive

government initiative that will have a significant impact on many different agencies, workers and recipients. Because of this, I need to gather evidence from representatives from each of these areas; an in-depth case study would be far too specialised and would give me answers that reflected only a narrow range of stakeholders and their perspectives.

Questionnaires are designed to collect data from large groups of people within a relatively short space of time. I do not need an expeditious tool for collecting data, rather one that will allow for answers that reflect a range of opinions and that will incorporate changing or developing points of view.

The tool of interviewing people will give me feedback through conversation and discussion. This will incorporate interactions with a range of different people and give me the opportunity to get to know their different needs, thoughts and experiences within their particular area of the ECM agenda. Such data should be rich in terms of providing me with a range of meanings, values and insights that reflect many more implications of ECM than I could hope to gather from a questionnaire or case study.

### **3.2.6 Conceptual framework.**

#### **Theory.**

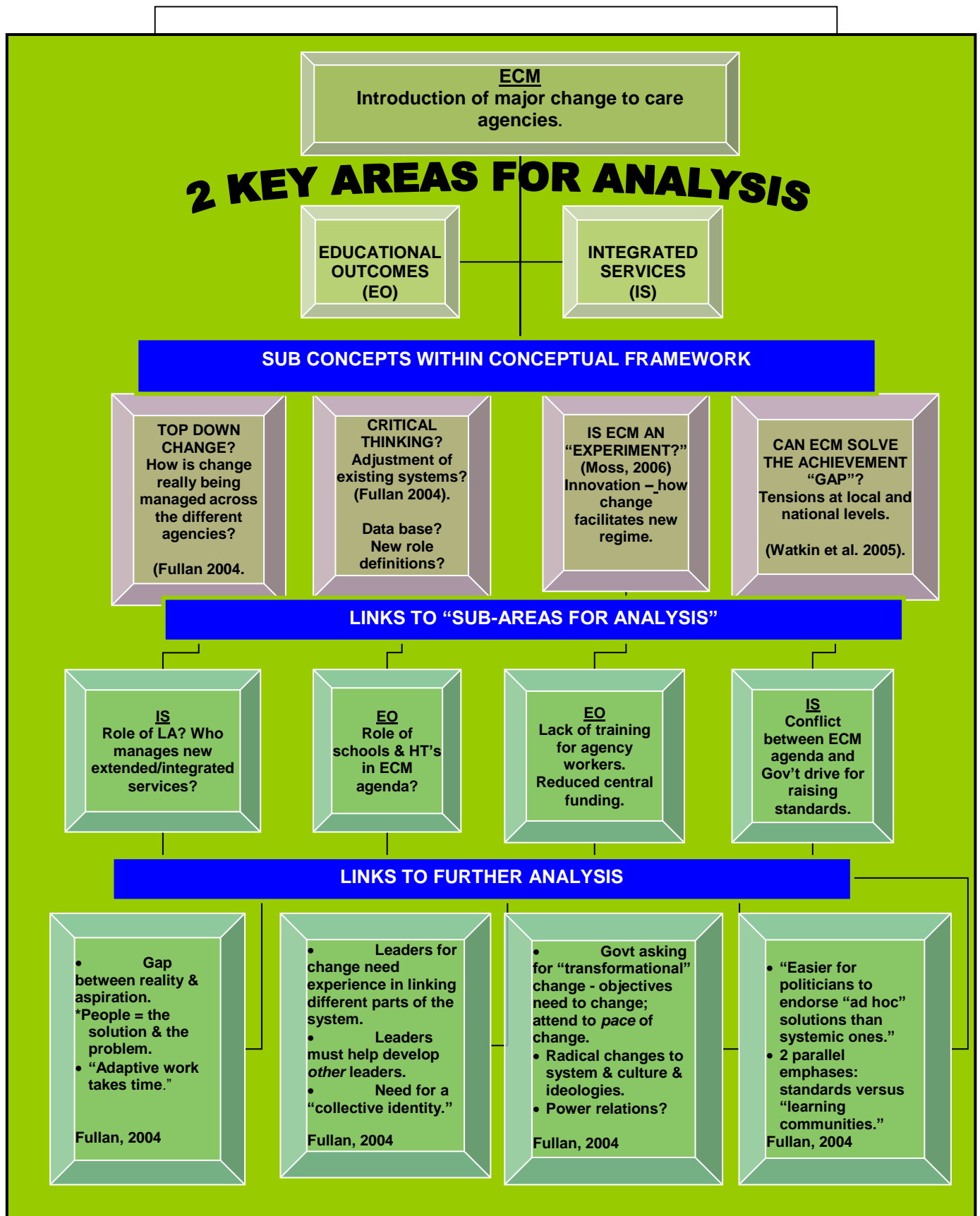
“The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated....the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions to scientific or policy-making audiences.” (Punch 2005, p.195). I have initially prepared three

questions for interviews and these are very open-ended, whilst incorporating the key areas for research (Table 3.1. Core questions for Research Study 1).

At the outset of the project, I did not know where the findings would direct my further research. Although the questions were prepared beforehand, they were not pre-specified (Punch 2005, p.23). They were designed to lead on to further discussion that would/might raise further, relevant questions as the interviews progressed. So if any theoretical basis can be ascribed to the project at the outset, it would be one of “unfolding,” with general questions asked within a loosely/partially structured design. The resultant data would be unstructured at the point of collection (Punch, 2005, p. 24) and from the analysis of these data I hoped that more focused questions and areas for further research would emerge.

### **A conceptual framework for analysis.**

The inclusion of a conceptual framework based on my reading of the literature has helped me to clarify my thinking and make explicit the main issues connected with the overall topic, the agenda of Every Child/Youth Matters (Punch 2005, p. 54). Presented in diagrammatic form, it lays out my ideas about the research that I formulated through critical appraisals of relevant literature, papers and official documentation, shown in Diagram 3.2: conceptual framework (1).



At the top of the flow chart are the two, overarching issues that I identified as key areas for analysis: educational outcomes and integrated services. (The word “educational” here does not refer exclusively to the agency of education, but the broader range of outcomes that reflect the life opportunities and resultant achievement of children and young people). The issue of integrated services incorporates the extent to which each of the agencies works with the other to identify and provide support for children and young people, as stated in the aims of the ECM/YM programme for change: “....secure a shift from intervention to prevention; and meet the needs of the most vulnerable” (Great Britain, DfES 2004b, p. 13). These two main issues represent the final outcomes of my literature appraisals and are crystallised out from the many issues aspects and other areas for consideration that arose from the literature. These are represented in Diagram 3.2 as “sub concepts within the conceptual framework” and “links to further analysis”. These latter show aspects that relate to the whole concept of change in education and draw heavily on the literature of Fullan (2004). At the time of constructing this framework, I did not know which, or if any these aspects would emerge as significant from my first research study, but through their inclusion in the diagram, they set out my prior knowledge and processes of theorising the concepts “onto the table” (Punch, 2005, p. 53) and into a conceptual framework. Each stage of the diagram reflects the questions that arose from the literature and my final three, core questions for the research interviews draw on these. The purpose of this conceptual framework is to provide me with an appropriate theoretical background/context within and from which I can develop my arguments and findings from the research data.

### **3.3 Ethical issues – the guiding principles.**

The research work I have conducted for this PhD thesis conforms to the ethical guidelines of the Ethics Committee of the University of Cumbria. The requirements of these guidelines are incorporated within the series of sub-headings, (shown below), that constitute the overall Ethical Framework for Research. I completed a detailed account of my proposed research work within the contexts of each of the sub-headings and this Ethical Framework was then submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. When approval was given, I ensured that a copy of this Ethical Framework was sent to the Director of Children's Services at each of the local authorities within which I conducted my interviews for the first research study and to the organisations I worked with in my second study. (A full copy of my Ethical Framework can be seen in the Appendix, Example A1. Ethical Framework for PhD research studies).

### **3.4 Details and difficulties of research design.**

#### **How participants are selected.**

The adults/professionals and children interviewed in the first Research Study and the second were selected in different ways. (The categories of interviewee are outlined later, in the section entitled "The sample of interviewees"). I am concerned in this section with the different *processes* by which the individuals to be interviewed were selected; how they were sourced and how this would affect their role as participants in the interview. My reasons for opening up this line of discussion are to do with my need to meet an "ethics of responsibility" within my research design. I could choose to ignore the reasons why and how participants

were chosen, but to do so would be unethical. That is to say, it would not acknowledge that different *processes of selection*, inevitably, would have an effect on the nature of the outcomes of the interviews. For example, if a participant was selected on the basis of their post code, I would most likely discover a different set of findings to those from interviewing participants according to their criminal convictions. For the purposes of this Study, participants were selected by the contacts (the welfare professionals) I nurtured within local authorities. I had to rely on their selection of participants, the rationale for which was no more formal than that it represented a 'convenient' (and available) sample of respondents. Local authority respondents were selected as the result of my own unsolicited inquiries, through networking at conferences. using local authority websites and the website of ADCS (Association of Directors of Children's Services). These guided me towards the relevant professionals (the gatekeepers) with whom I needed to make initial contact and the type and nature of the people I sourced through this method was partly random. In instances where I successfully sourced a contact through county council websites it was the outcome of my making a "best fit" assessment of their relevance to the research project, through a consideration of Ofsted's Annual Performance Assessments (APA), which indicated where there might be examples of good and less good practice. In the event, I might be interviewing them, or someone else that they were to recommend. Because of the limited timescale of my funded PhD research work, it was necessary to complete the interviews within the space of a week at the most (to contain the expenses incurred for accommodation, travel etc). For this first research study I managed to conduct 10 interviews. Because of the small size (in statistical



terms) of the sample of respondents, it would be unwise for me to make any generalisations, or general assertions, from the data analysis. But although the size of the sample is small, it nevertheless rendered rich data that contained many further insights in to the area of my research, which are reflected in the findings.

**Participant, respondent or research subject? The differences between “engaging” in and “espousing” ethical practice.**

Experience has shown that there can be a difference between the *espoused* principles of a proposed research project (such as the information I have included in the above section on ethics - the statements referring to “Guidelines for planning, conducting and reporting research”) and what is actually *engaged* with during the research process itself. Through the actual *engagement* of the interview process, lines of discussion and thought may develop that I had not anticipated when I constructed my statements outlining my *espoused* research processes . Mauthner et al.( 2002, p. 91) describe this as “a dissonance” occurring “between the ideal of ‘participation’ presented in the ethical codes of behaviour...and what actually occurred during the research process itself.” The following is an example of how this might occur in Research Study 1. In response to the open questions I ask during interview, a young person’s responses and thoughts may touch on an unhappy experience he/she has had. This will change the anticipated nature of our exchange of ideas and understanding and shift the process of the interview from that originally planned (the *espoused* principles). As a consequence, I might need to draw on my professional educational experience in order to put the young person at their

ease, to reassure them of the confidentiality of the interview conditions. In such a situation, I would be drawing on my “tacit knowledge” (Ely et al. 1991, p.104) as an educational professional. Although I have presented my research project in the role of a PhD research student, all my experience in education would be used to deal with unforeseen turns – such as this - in the process of the interview, to ensure the subject feels secure and supported, and will be encouraged to continue despite any painful memories that might be stirred by the discussions. Where personal, or even private experiences are revealed to the researcher (me) in an atmosphere of trust, this will provide “access to the rich, deep data, that the qualitative researcher seeks” (Mauthner et al. 2002, p.92.)

This range of skills used by a researcher is what Mauthner et al. refer to when they discuss the “ethics of responsibility” in research (ibid. p. 94). They show how, through reflecting on his/her own background as a professional, the researcher constructs his/her own sense of identity. This should serve to equip them for “gathering coherent narratives” from an interview subject and facilitating an active research relationship that “invites joint participation.... involves the exchange of ideas and understanding and is a shared enterprise” (ibid. p. 94.)

This is an accurate description of what I am aspiring to achieve through the open questions I have prepared for the interviews. Therefore, the subjects of the interviews will be participants rather than merely respondents and I am considering the outcomes of the Study as being two- way; useful to the participants and to me.

For my research purposes, such ethical concerns will be assimilated through my ability to understand and smooth the progress of the shifting relationship(s)

between me and the interviewees as they arise in the process of the research, outlined above. As the relationships change and alter through discussion, so the roles of the participants also change.

### **The implications for ethical practice.**

In the case of children and young people who require informed consent to be granted by an agreed adult, parent or carer, their role at the start of the interview process would be that of *compliance*. This corresponds to the second mode of participation shown in model (3a) of Diagram 3a and 3b: Modes of research participation and outcomes: comparison between general model and PhD research project, (after Truman 2001), which describes a subject's role as compliant, or agreed. For both my research studies, the participation of a child or vulnerable young person will be agreed *for* them by a responsible adult – a case worker, parent or carer. Diagram 3a, shows the type of research outcome that is usually associated with a compliant participant as *beneficial*, such as in the case of research trials for drugs or a certain type of treatment in health care. This would be consistent with the rationale of my proposed research project. I have stated in the ethics section (Appendix Example A1) that I hope the findings from this research will go towards supporting – and informing – those who work towards achieving the aims of the Every Child/Youth Matters programme, both through its focus on the needs and circumstances of the participants and the validity and quality of the data analysis. As the interview progresses, the *compliant* child/young person participant may well become a *consultative* participant, because of the shift in the discussion. We may become involved in a discussion about something particularly sensitive to the participant

– as I outlined in the above section. As the circumstances of our interview change, so too does the role of the child/young person. They may share some deeply personal details about decisions they have taken without their parents’/carers’ knowledge or permission. Consequently, the basis on which I have procured informed consent may now become invalid – or will it? I may find myself engaging in discussing issues that range beyond the immediate scope of the questions and involve me in an exchange with the participant who is now in a different participatory role to that of compliance. This would relate to the right hand model, Diagram 3b, and the mode of “consultation and co-operation”, which corresponds to the changed nature of the research outcomes, from being merely “beneficial” (or *for* the participant) to those that might develop as a result of working *with* the participant. In the diagram I refer to these outcomes as reflecting “the perceptions and needs of participants”. The shifts in participation mode and the corresponding changes to the nature of the research outcomes are subtle, but for this project, the diagram represents the way that different levels of participation (and perforce the range and nature of data) affect the way the research outcomes can be of use.

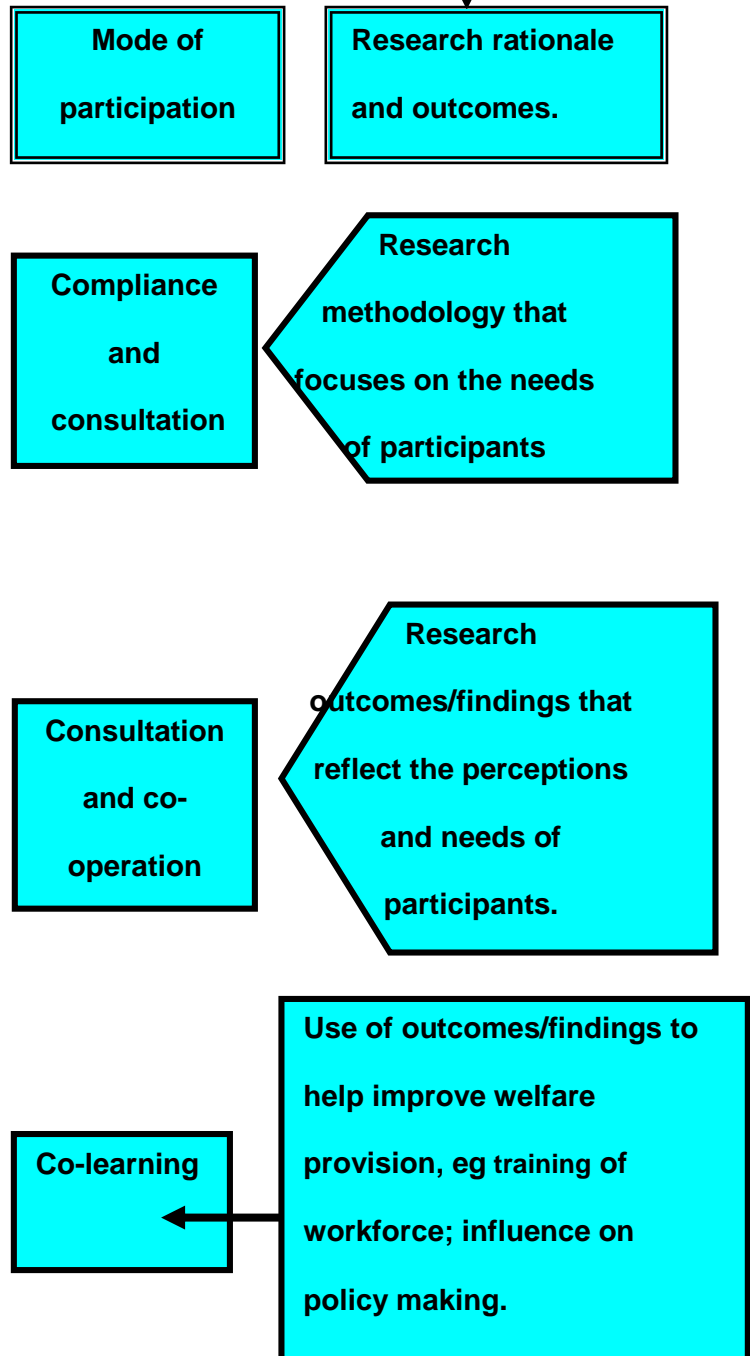
**Diagrams 3.3a and 3.3b. Modes of research participation and outcomes: comparison between general model and PhD research. (After Truman, 2001).**

**Diagram 3.3a: Continuum of modes of participation in research.**

Mode of participation in research (participants)	Type of research outcome
Co-option (agreed) →	Research <i>on</i> participants – theoretical
Compliance (agreed) →	Research <i>for</i> (beneficial outcomes (such as health research))
Consultation →	Research <i>for/with</i> (community)
Co-operation →	Research <i>with</i> (community)
Co-learning →	Research <i>with/by</i> (community)

**Diagram 3.3b:**

**Continuum of modes of participation in this doctoral research study.**



### **Informed consent – consenting to what?**

The ethical processes and guidelines that underpin this project respect the fact that where minors, (children aged under 16 years) or vulnerable young people are research participants, they will require a parent or carer to give their consent on the child's/young person's behalf. However, children aged under 16 years *are* empowered to give their consent according to the Gillick ruling (*Gillick versus Wisbech* 1986), which states that, amongst other decisions, a child under 16 years of age is old enough to make their own decisions about whether to have sex (or not). This opens up new lines of discussion about how research participants are judged to be competent to make decisions about giving their consent to take part. What is competent?

The rights of parents in relation to medical matters concerning their children are subject to the ruling by the House of Lords in the case *Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority* (1985, in which Lord Scarman stated at the ruling that: "*As a matter of law the parental right to determine whether or not their minor child below the age of 16 will have medical treatment terminates if and when the child achieves sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him to understand fully what is proposed.*" The implications of this for the ethical issue of procuring informed consent from research participants are considerable. In a desire to adhere to good ethical practice, I have stated that for any children or young people under the age of 16 years, I will seek informed consent from their parent/carer. However, according to Lord Scarman, (*Wisbech AHA* 1985) a minor child may well have "sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him/her to understand fully what is proposed." Does this mean that the need to

procure consent on his/her behalf is no longer necessary? The conditions of consent require a person to:

- Be fully informed
- Be competent to make a decision to give their consent
- Give their consent voluntarily. (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com> 2009).

If any of these conditions do not exist, then consent is not informed, and it is invalid. For my proposed Research Study, I do not consider the potentially changing roles and circumstances during the interviews to constitute unethical practice. I have already stated that, in advance I have an awareness of how the roles of both interviewer and interviewee may alter and shift as a result of engaging in the research process. This helps to raise my own awareness of the complex ethical dimensions involved if and when such changes occur. Such ethical concerns will be assimilated through my ability to understand and smooth the progress of the shifting relationship(s) of the interviews – as I stated above. Therefore I will deal with these ethical concerns (if and when they arise) as an educational professional and thereby with due consideration of the “ethical components” (Mauthner et al. page 94) of the interview process.

### **3.5 RESEARCH STUDY 1.**

**....the first attempt at interviewing is like walking a tightrope without a net while juggling sharp swords.”**

**(Ely et al, 1991.)**

### **3.5.1 The sample of interviewees.**

#### **Categories .**

Having identified the research population I wanted to interview, I targeted participants who were managers, case workers, teachers, parents/carers and children and young people across the four care agencies within the chosen local authorities. In the event, I was able to capture a sample of respondents who had a range of perspectives: young people aged from 14 years to 17 years (including one interview with a case worker, young person and his father); Youth Offending Team (YOT) case workers; YOT managers; multi agency professionals responsible for looked after children and a school improvement officer, see Table 3.2: Table of samples of respondents in interviews, Research Study 1. It is relevant to the research to record at this stage that I wholly dependent on the contacts I had made through networking, for arranging the interviews (see Section 3.4, Details and difficulties of research design) and obtaining this range of respondents. My initial contacts were connected to a Youth Offending Team in one of the local authorities and other professional elsewhere, that I had made through my own efforts. Therefore the nature of and personnel for the interviews were determined by who was available, their case load at the time and who I was referred on to by other contacts, rather than by what and who I would have interviewed if I had been free to choose.

There is an absence of data from a particular group of respondents, that of school teachers; the impact of this absence is that the perspective of a school environment is not reflected in the research and it is likely that this would have provided me with information about the ways in which teachers and school pastoral staff considered the ECM/YM policies and programmes to have



affected their practice. This data would have given me a useful perspective with which to compare the data from the YOT respondents in local authority C, in which the manager talks negatively about schools:

*“....this issue of league tables. (The attitude was) ‘we don’t want problems in school therefore we’ll get them out – that drive of we’ll get rid of the problem rather than deal with it became so negative it created problems for the other agencies” (Box 4.1).*

With regard to the issue of informed consent (and consent generally), in local authority C I did not interview any of the young people on their own; in each of their interviews a YOT case worker, a carer/parent or both were present. Because of this, I did not need to ask for signed consent forms as the case workers acted in loco parentis in all but one of the interviews. In local authority G, I interviewed professionals and no children or young people. In local authority D, I interviewed a young man aged 18 who had been in the care of the local authority from the age of 5 years and for this I did not require informed consent, but he gave his consent to the interview.

I had decided not to be concerned about stratifying the sample (Gill and Johnson, 1991, p. 82) through specifying particular sub-groups of respondents, because at the initial stage of this project I did not consider characteristics such as gender and ethnicity to be significant. The important thing was to secure a reasonable sample of respondents that represented a range of perspectives. For this I had to rely on suggestions made by the initial contacts I made within the local authorities. Thus, interviewees will have been selected without bias and on the basis of their availability, rather than because of their personal circumstances. With a total number of no more than ten interviews, this was a

small sample for research purposes. However, my priorities were that it should be representative of the population I had set out to investigate and it needed to be a sample of as manageable a size as possible, as I was responsible for doing all the transcription myself - within a limited budget.

**Table 3.2: Table of samples of respondents in interviews, Research Study 1.**

<b>Sample of respondents for (Research Study 1).</b>				
<b><u>Local authority C (rural)</u></b>				
<b>Welfare professionals</b>	<b>M/F</b>	<b>Clients</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Individual/ group interview</b>
YOT Case Worker.	F	Early 30's		Individual
YOT Case Worker	M	Mid-late 40's		Individual
YOT Manager.	M	Late 40's		Individual
	M	Young offender	16yrs	Individual (in presence of case worker and carer)
	M	Young offender	14 yrs	Individual (in presence of case worker and father)
	M	Young offender	15 yrs	Individual (in presence of case worker)
<b><u>Local authority G (city council)</u></b>				

Welfare professionals	M/F	Clients	Age	Individual/ group interview
YOT manager	M		Early 30's	Individual
School Improvement Officer	F		Early 30's	individual
<b><u>Local authority D (city council)</u></b>				
Welfare professionals	M/F	Clients	M/F; age	Individual/ group interview
Multi agency team responsible for looked after children and young people (health, education, social services).	M&F			Group
		Young person aged 18 – looked after child since aged 7 years.	M; 18 yrs	Individual
<b>TOTAL INTERVIEWS WELFARE PROFESSIONALS</b>	<b>6</b>			
<b>TOTAL INTERVIEWS CLIENTS</b>		<b>4</b>		
			<b>OVERALL TOTAL INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>10</b>

### 3.5.2. The nature of the interviews.

#### **Interviews, the rationale for extending discussion.**

“The interviewer knows the areas that need to be explored and sees to it that this occurs.” How this is done during research defines the difference between an “ethnographic interviewer and others” (Mauthner et al. p. 24, 2002). This directs me to two issues: a consideration of how I intended to structure the interviews for research purposes and the relationship between research participant and the interviewer (me.)

Through using open-ended questions and, with an awareness that the interviews might take unexpected turns, I was setting up interviews that are “unstructured.” This does not mean that they will be aimless, or random in nature, but conducted in a climate where “the person interviewed is a full partner in the endeavour and often provides the surprising and useful directions not allowed by more researcher-centred interviews.” (Ely 1991, pp 58 & 59). This quotation from Margot Ely’s book describes how an unstructured interview can be effective and how it differs from a more rigid structure that incorporates a set list of questions led by the researcher. Some people regard ethnographic interviews as unstructured and others as structured. Ely refutes this saying “this is a misconception. Every interview has a structure; the difference lies in how that structure is negotiated” (p.58). Such a framework for interviews suggests an “ethnographic” approach, which means that I am endeavouring to avoid “being clumsy, asking not probing and maybe biasing the answer by the way I phrase the question” (Ely, p. 58.) Ethnography is defined thus: “ethno” means people and “graphy” refers to describing something. Ethnographic research is

looking beyond merely answers to questions. It means “describing a culture and understanding a way of life from the point of view of its participants) (Punch 2005, p.149) Whilst such an approach is not my chosen methodology, I do hope that through gleaning people’s own reflections about their experiences and how these have changed (or not) since the introduction of the ECM/YM agenda, I will access valid, primary evidence about professional practice across the different agencies rather than answers that simply “tick a box.” This is important for my thesis because it is only with such authentic findings that I can hope to make meaningful inferences that have a significance rooted in the reality of what I am researching.

For this first research study, the interviews had a duration of between 40 and 60 minutes and the transcripts ran from between 20 – 40 pages.

### **3.6. Method of Analysis.**

Before beginning Research Study 1, I wanted to clarify my own thinking about how I intended to analyse the data. This process was assisted by a series of seminars I attended in 2007, at a summer school for post-graduates and the experience I gained from writing a presentation paper at the Research Fest at the end of the summer school, which stimulated a great deal of thought about the fundamentals of conducting research. What are we doing it for? What do we do with the data? What do we hope to find - after we have done the research - that did not exist before? When I looked again at my original research proposal, it seemed imprecise and to lack a clear focus:

*“I propose to analyse the impact of ECM/YM on professional practice across the agencies of education, health, social services and youth justice.”*

My literature review and discussions at the summer school seminars enabled me to sharpen the proposal a little more to the following:

*“My main aims are to address the impact of the ECM agenda on the bridging (or not) of the gap in achievement and life opportunity that exists between children and young people from the opposite ends of the socio-economic spectrum.”*

These aims, newly-worded from the original, served to give me a slightly clearer research brief, with the space for potential outcomes that may indicate how I am to evaluate “professional practice”. Because this particular programme for change (ECM/YM) is itself very new, it would have been difficult to set about disproving or validating any existing theories about it. From the literature review, I know that research has been carried out into particular aspects of the programme (such as integrated services, new roles for local authorities in education and professional identities (Robinson et al. 2005) but at the time I had not identified any *theories* that were grounded in or had emerged from research into the programme itself.

My Research Study 1 will capture data (from loosely-structured interviews) that will give me information about how different people view their own experiences of the ECM/YM programme. Much of this data will be in the form of value judgements, or statements about what people deem to be good or bad, right or wrong – according to their different viewpoints. Value judgements are often described as “statements of “ought” or “should,” contrasting with statements of “is.” The problem with these judgements is that it is not clear how – or whether – we can use empirical evidence to make such value judgements. This problem is defined as the “fact to value” gap (Punch 1998, p. 47); ie there is no logical way to get from statements of facts to statements of value (or vice versa). Some

other basis will be required for their justification. It would have been difficult to “shoehorn” this kind of data into a “received” scientific hypothesis, because of the absence of cause and effect variables, from which I could induct any sort of “theory.” In other words, as there was – at the outset of my research - no grounded theory existing about the ECM/YM programme that was verifiable, I could see that I needed to elicit my own categories of information from the data, using a grounded theory approach to analysis. Another significant issue about my research was that it would be the “humanness” (Dean and Bartlett 1997, p. 178) of the respondents, as much as the data they provided that would relate directly to the key issues and concepts of the ECM/YM programme.

### **3.7. Grounded Theory – what is it?**

Glaser and Strauss (2007) explain that the emergent categories from an analysis of research data must be “meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behaviour under study” (ibid. p.3). This is meaningful for my particular study and subsequent qualitative analysis. Within the data of my Research Study 1, I wanted to identify the very categories from which – instead of a theory – I could extract a set of *findings*.

#### **Relating Grounded Theory to this Research Study.**

I took a broadly “grounded theory” approach because far from having a “body of theory” as my starting point, my research proposal was concerned with a piece of government legislation, proposing “transformational” change (Great Britain. DfES 2005b) that is still (at the time of writing, 2009) in variable, or “patchy” stages of implementation. The rate at which it is being implemented and its impact across the care agencies is what I was interested in. These were always

going to vary across different local authorities and agencies. This, along with the constraints of time and resources for this small sample research project, would make it very difficult for me to identify any sample of the target population as truly representative of the overall population of interest (ie local authorities throughout England). Rather, my aim was to discover exactly what (in terms of concepts and relevant issues) the views of my individual respondents represented.

Very few books on this programme exist yet and the knowledge that is available about Every Child/Youth Matters is mostly contained in articles and papers that emanate from the government, scholarly and practitioner journals.

The outcomes of my literature review were a number of analyses and appraisals of the writing from these sources, which enabled me to construct a conceptual framework that served as my starting point and framework for analysis. From such a starting point, any theory or findings I was to infer from the research data might be at best conjecture, because any data I captured (certainly in Research Study 1) would be more *experimental* than *empirical* (Bartlett and Payne 1997, p.173). Researching the outcomes of such a programme for change was not going to provide me with data that could be measured accurately, because it would reflect the views, opinions and experiences of people in contrasting roles. I would need to sift, analyse and sort this data to look for patterns in terms of categories and concepts, to direct me towards a focus for my second research study. Therefore the findings that I constructed would emerge directly from the data I collected.

I did not apply all of the steps that constitute the whole process of grounded theory as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (of which there are ten), but used the



steps selectively, focusing on the tools for coding, categorising and the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p. 105) for identifying some core categories.

I could identify my own research stance closely to the definition of qualitative research suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1989) that characterises qualitative research as “immersion in the everyday life of the chosen setting....[these researchers] value and seek to discover participants’ perspectives on their worlds )ibid. 1989, p.9). My research quest was to *discover* the meaning of my data. The data I analysed was from and about people and therefore embedded in their own experiences, constructed from their own particular perspectives of and positions in their professional (and non-professional) worlds. From such data, I did not intend to discover a clear “linear causality” or “value-free” outcome when I came to interpret the analysis of the data. My research focuses on discovering the impact of the ECM/YM programme on professional practice and the life chance outcomes for young people. Initially, there may be very little tangible, “hard” evidence, or measurable outcomes arising from the first research study but I hope to discover, from coding and categorising my transcriptions, a range of nuanced understandings that will provide me with information that might reaffirm (or contradict) the concepts I chose initially and also suggest new lines of thought. These aims are effectively encapsulated by Glaser and Strauss (2007, p. 107): “As categories and properties emerge, the analyst will discover two kinds: those (s)he has constructed her/himself....and those that have been abstracted from the language of the research situation.”

The significance of this is that I would avoid analysing my data in a restricted, linear fashion and thereby running the risk of missing out on the significance of any turns and twists within the interviewees' narratives that might direct me to new, emerging concepts and categories.

### **3.8. Programme systems.**

The programme being researched in this project is the ECM/YM programme, and its effect on practice across the agencies that care for children and young people. For the purposes of this research, the transformational changes expected of the programme should not be viewed as simply the mechanics of an agenda that is "targeted" at "subjects." The social relations, cognitive and affective processes that inform the actions (and reactions) of people, present me, as researcher, with a far more complex and delicate landscape than that of the "aim and fire" idea of imposing a programme/system upon a subject in order to bring about (measurable) change. Thus I will be directed towards questioning the very terms I use in the categories I identify from the data and have constructed myself (such as "integrated services") and what they actually mean; how they are defined and understood by professionals in different authorities and across the different agencies. This framework of analysis will enable me to understand more fully the "human actions and responses" (recorded in my data) "in terms of their location within different layers of social reality." My aim here is to discover a deeper meaning about events and actions, rather than "taking a successionist's view of causation [or one that is seen] as a relationship between discrete events (that is cause and effect)." (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p. 64).

How this methodology is applied, and its outcomes are described in the Findings section, Chapter 4.

### **3.9. An appraisal of Grounded Theory.**

I considered carefully which analytic tools to use in my data analysis, because I needed to be aware of the potential limitations - as well as advantages - of a grounded theory approach. I drew on a critique of grounded theory (Haig, 1995) in which he cites a statement of Strauss': "because we do not have to prepare an articulated problem in advance of inquiry, researchers may come to their problems at any point in the research process" (Haig, 1995, p.3). He suggests that people often mistakenly assume that in saying this, Strauss is expressing his belief in "a break from linear thinking methodology" on the sole basis of the flexibility of considering the work of the (research) method before the (research) problem. Haig believes that this statement "simply points out that the steps constituting a linear progression need not occur in a fixed order (ibid, p.3)." I agree with this point of view. Putting horses before carts does not necessarily mean that transport will be - of an instant- revolutionised. But for me, the strength of the grounded theory approach is that we are encouraged to set out and explore the chosen area of research with no preconceptions about what we *ought* to look for. Strauss' commitment to putting the research method before the problem proved liberating for me, because it presented a qualitative methodology that represented a degree of flexibility that suited my open research question and facilitated the "systematic discovery of the theory (or, for me the findings) from the data of social research" (Glaser and Strauss 2007, p. 3). From my appraisal of Glaser and Strauss' approach to grounded theory, I

became aware that their view of and rationale for sampling (in their specific research project) was different to those that applied to my first research study. They recommend the collection of data through theoretical sampling, which they define as the process of “data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and then decides what data to collect next” (ibid, 45). Through the processes of my first research study the data was collected from a sample of respondents that was made available to me through the ‘gatekeepers’ I had initially made contact with, (they comprised personal and networked contacts) who worked within the welfare agencies in different local authorities. Whilst the sample of research interviewees did represent each of the agencies (in line with my research design) this was a serendipitous outcome rather than one that was the result of an organised scheme or method. In my reading of Glaser and Strauss’ approach to grounded theory I could see that, in contrast, my research processes and aims were positioned differently to theirs. This first research study was to be conducted at the beginning of my research work in the field, a much earlier stage than Glaser and Strauss were at when they recommended the collection of data by theoretical sampling. For their purposes, this type of sampling was a systematic way of refining their collection of data, using an iterative process that would move their coding and analysis ever nearer to the generation of a theory. My research aims were (and are) different; they are broader and less systematic. As stated above, I expected to discover “a range of nuanced understandings that will provide me with information that both reaffirms the concepts I chose initially and suggests new lines of thought” rather than using the data analysis to “drill down” to a theory.

Therefore, the coding and analysis of the Research Study 1 data will provide me with *findings* or hypotheses, rather than theory, which will inform the conceptual framework for the next research study. Initially I wondered if being selective in the application of grounded theory tools would prevent, or constrain, my being able to tap into “the fullest extent [of] the in vivo patterns of integration in the data itself” (ibid. page 109), but in fact this was not the case (see section 3.1.2, Delimiting the Theory). Viewed within the context of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2007) the data analysis for the first research study will have effectively been the first round of theoretical sampling; but for my purposes, the analysis will have helped me to discover key findings with which to move forward to my next research study.

Discovering a set of findings (or hypotheses) from my research data may not constitute the same thing as being able to “write theory” (ibid. p.113) from the data, but I do not feel I should apologise for this. Glaser and Strauss (ibid. p.194) talk about “saturating all possible findings for suggesting hypotheses” and propose taking core concepts and running them with “every other questionnaire item” that is relevant to the analyst’s area of interest. Whilst I am conducting interviews rather than circulating questionnaires, a significant difference between Glaser and Strauss’ original research and mine is the sheer quantity of data with which they worked and the extent to which their findings are striated. This striation is apparent in the form of identifying clusters of, and associations between, items from questionnaires and developing “indices to indicate the concepts of the theory” (ibid. p. 190) and establish the relationships between them (the concepts). The theoretical relevance of the concept is demonstrated, they state, through the extent to which an index “works” when

subjected to a “multitude of cross tabulations.” The evidence base for my first research study is very small in comparison with that of Glaser and Strauss’. I will not have data of sufficient volume and extent that would withstand (or do statistical justice to) such highly detailed analysis as “cross tabulation,” “dichotomising the indices” and “validating a core index” (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, pp.191 – 193).

Rather, my analysis of the findings from the first research study will be based on the processes of coding, categorising and constant comparison methods as outlined in the processes of Grounded Theory see below, (Bartlett and Payne, 1997). When I come to constructing a hypothesis, or analysing the findings, for my further research study, I will need to conduct and interpret the analysis within a methodology that enables me to identify the emergence of the most significant properties of the categories. I shall not be equipped to compile such dense and finely detailed analyses as described above by Glaser and Strauss, but my analysis will nonetheless follow their processes of coding for categories and the constant comparison method.

### **Concepts and categories.**

From my own critical analysis of Grounded Theory, I find the process by which we are directed to identify categories from interview transcripts far from straightforward. Even the definitions of the words ‘categories’ and ‘concepts’, as suggested by Bartlett and Payne (1997, p.186) , created areas of confusion for me when analysing the transcripts from the first research study. Both words are often used interchangeably by grounded theorists, which at first I found confusing. A category is ‘merely the collection of specific ways in which a

concept has appeared in the data' (Bartlett and Payne 1997, p.186). My confusion over how to delineate categories and concepts was further compounded by the fact that my interviews were conducted with people in different professional roles. This presented me with data about the same categories that were presented in very different ways because they were described from different perspectives. (Should I therefore code concepts in different categories, when they are described from a different perspective? Or should I code concepts in the same category, but take account of the different perspectives in my analysis?) When reading about the "properties" of categories (Glaser and Strauss 2007, p.108) and "core concepts" I felt that I needed to develop a simpler, clearer set of working definitions for these terms, one with which I felt more secure. I decided to base these new definitions on a model that I have worked with in the past, used in a strategic context for defining the differences between skills and competences. Hamel and Prahalad (1994, pp 202 – 203) define a core competence as "a bundle of skills and technologies rather than a single, discrete skill or technology." Using this definition, *competences* in the workplace are defined as "bundles" of different skills, whereas *skills* have a more finely-tuned definition, pertaining to specific aspects such as technical, craft, assembly, negotiation and so on. (When analysing an organisation's competitiveness or its strategic position, it is useful to be able to differentiate between the specific skills used by professionals in their work and their overall competences, or collective groups of skills).

Along the lines of this model, I decided to adapt Glaser and Strauss' definitions of categories and conceptual properties and apply them slightly differently in my processes of coding, categorising and the use of the constant comparison

method. The *categories* I have constructed and that have emerged from the data in the first research study are the collective groups or “bundles” of the *concepts*, which are the finer grained aspects of the categories. These concepts can be found in the first conceptual framework (Diagram 3.2), where they originally had different labels, such as sub concepts, links to further analysis and links to sub-areas.

As I re-visited my interview transcripts, adding to the analytic memos and refinement of my coding, I began to understand how this process could reach the point of “saturation” (Glaser and Strauss 2007, p.194), where the analyst has cross referenced and carried out constant comparison to the point where no more new associations occur. I could see the power of this from an analytical point of view, but also that it might present me with a possible “dead end”. That I have no “pre-set or valued hypothesis” (ibid. 2007, p.194) to hinder or skew my findings, I see as a strength. On the other hand, I only have data from ten or eleven interviews on which to base my analysis. To go about the process of generating theory from data, Glaser and Strauss refer to the need to “saturate all possible findings” by taking the core concepts and running them with every set of data (interview transcripts). With only a small number of interviews to work with, how will I know if I have selected the most relevant/effective issues as concepts within the categories? Will I have enough data with which to saturate (in statistical terms) the possible findings? When I read further about Glaser and Strauss’ process of constant comparison, I began to see a way through this dilemma.



### **3.10. Constant comparative method of qualitative analysis**

**(Glaser and Strauss, from p.101).**

It is important to state that I have been selective in the application of Glaser & Strauss' analytical tools, choosing those I identified as particularly useful to my own research, rather than attempting to apply their process of grounded theory analysis wholesale, or indiscriminately. This was because with such a small sample of data (compared with that used by Glaser and Strauss) my research purpose could not be one of generating a theory, but rather of identifying key findings from within the data. Thus, the steps of my analytical process, up to the induction of the key findings, are set out below.

**Recording memos.** I used memos to identify the shifts in – or “different “emphases of” – thinking (p.107). These will be shown in examples of the annotated (in handwriting) transcripts of my interview. They provide an important function in *moving the methodology and analysis forward*. (Ely, Anzul, Freidman, Garner and McCormack Steinmetz 1991, p.80). These are included in my transcripts as handwritten notes in the left hand margin and as such, they appear as a “conversation with oneself about what has occurred in the research process” (Ely et al. 1991, p. 80). They incorporate insights, leads and suggestions for future action.

**Coding an incident into a category.** This is evident within the interview transcripts. I have written the coding for a category in the right hand margins and also included – in a different colour – any references to concepts that corresponded to those in my original conceptual framework. My coding for

categories also reflected the adjustments I made to my thinking in response to the emergence of new aspects and ideas from the “language of the research” (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p. 107) (See below).

Using examples from my research work, I have chosen to define *incidents* as the occurrence of reported evidence given by the interviewees in response to my questions. The process of coding the incidents into categories is shown in the following example. One of my questions led respondents to talk about the ways in which local authorities were re-organising their internal structures (ie the different agencies) in response to the ECM/YM programme. Before going out into “the field” and hearing first hand evidence from professionals working in local authorities, I could not foresee what the exact context would be for this category. So the overall category I constructed myself, before conducting the research interviews, was ‘managing change’ (identified within my conceptual framework). As I progressed with the interview transcripts, I could see the data was indicating different sorts of concepts to do with this category. On closer inspection, these concepts indicated the emergence of a different type of category. After my initial analysis, I decided that “planning for ECM change” more accurately encapsulated the category for this new set of concepts and was therefore a more appropriate term. After closer scrutiny of the data, I deduced further that the term ‘structure and planning for ECM’ best represented this new category. This was because at the heart of the data, people were telling me about how the local authorities were re-structuring the different agencies in planned response to the Every Child Matters: Change for Children government document (Great Britain. DfES, 2004a). The stages by which I arrived at these findings are shown in closer detail in stages 3 and 4 in Diagram 3.4 Coding:

Constructing and Abstracting Categories from research data. In stages 3 and 4 in the diagram, I have used quotes from interview transcripts that support the decision-making processes that led me through the process of constructing the final category that finally emerged as 'Structure and planning for ECM', from the original category of 'Managing Change' (stage 1).

**Diagram 3.4. Coding: Constructing and Abstracting  
Categories from research data.**

**1. Managing change:**

*This category was identified before conducting interviews for the first research study. It refers to the way the ECM programme is being delivered within local authorities' Children's Services, how the agencies are introducing the programme into their own practice.*

**2. Application of grounded theory analytical tools.**

- ▶ *Coding incidents for categories.*
- ▶ *Analysis of memos.*
- ▶ *Comparison of incidents with previous incidents in the same and different groups.*

**3. Emerging new category, (initial).**

*In the first stages of analysis, the new category of 'structure and planning' emerged, followed by comparison with incidents from other interviews. The different, subsequent concepts that emerged as a result of this process included:*

- *"there is a model currently being trialled, based around 3 primary schools";*
- *"we're looking at whether to dispense with/refine the number of groups meeting as part of the re-structuring for ECM change for children".*

**4. Emerging new category (final).**

*'Structure and planning for ECM' emerged as the final, newly-defined category. The properties of this new category best encapsulated the many different aspects quoted by respondents when describing how the new ECM/YM programmes were actually being implemented:*

- *"we've been promoting such values and aspects through teaching for a long time."*
- *"school governors receive training – we are responsible for this and for the focus on Every Child Matters."*

The comments in stages 3 and 4 are examples of the data that guided and prompted my thinking through the analytic processes of coding and abstraction.

**Comparing the incident with previous incidents in the same and different groups (of respondents) coded in the same category.** (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p. 106).

I was careful to transcribe and analyse the evidence given by respondents according to the different levels of seniority they worked at within the same local authority and their distinct areas of responsibility.

My handwritten analysis was compiled on A3 paper in landscape orientation. I recorded the data from two interviews on one page, using two main columns in a table format, shown in Diagram 3.5, Coding for Categories. In this layout I created a central column into which I wrote a list of all the concepts I had identified in the data that related to the major categories and these were identified in boxes, as shown in the diagram on the far left hand and right hand sides of the page. This layout enabled me to record the data from two interviews on the same page and thus to compare and contrast the data captured from respondents in different roles. In the example shown in Diagram 3.5, data from the manager of the Youth Offending Team is on the left and data from the School Improvement officer (Education) on the right.

**Diagram 3.5. Coding for Categories: layout for recording data by hand.**

<p><b><u>Agency interviewed:</u></b></p> <p><i>Youth Offending Team</i></p>	<p><b>CONCEPTS</b></p> <p><b>(UP TO 10 LISTED)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Agency interviewed:</u></b></p> <p><i>Education</i></p>
<p><b><u>Category 1. Leadership and management.</u></b></p> <p>Relevant data from transcript listed here.</p>	<p>1. Concept 1.</p> <p>10. Concept 10.</p>	<p><b><u>Category 1. Leadership and management.</u></b></p> <p>Relevant data from transcript listed here.</p>
<p><b><u>Category 2. Managing change.</u></b></p> <p>Relevant data from transcript listed here.</p>	<p>1. Concept 1.</p> <p>10. Concept 10.</p>	<p><b><u>Category 2. Managing change.</u></b></p> <p>Relevant data from transcript listed here.</p>

I entered the data from interview transcripts in each of the columns (Youth Offending Team and Education) and highlighted by hand the incidence of the concepts as they occurred, to make it easy to identify them.

What became apparent from the data was the difference in vocabularies used by respondents across their different roles. For example, when I read through the data with regard to the concept of ‘structure/planning for ECM/YM,’ the respondent who was the manager of the Youth Offending Team in a local

authority talked about aspects such as the benefits of having a large senior management team (SMT):

*“One of the strengths we have is the size of the management team that sits in the children’s services.”*

He outlined how this lent strength to the implementation of the ECM/YM programme. He also referred to the need to eliminate unnecessary duplication of roles and an awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of centralising leadership functions:

*“It’s interesting you coming to talk to us now. Because of the change to the ECM agenda and Children’s Services ...we’re in the process of teasing out which bits of the YOT remain as a discrete/closed team and which will sit out in the neighbourhoods”.*

This reflected a *strategic* view of the overall structuring of the agency teams in their delivery of welfare services in the authority. By contrast, the School Improvement Officer (SIO) who worked in education in the same authority, referred to aspects such as:

SIO: *“the partners we work with are the police, primary care trust, and community-based services”;*

Q: *“Who or what is the focus for delivering the targeted support?”*

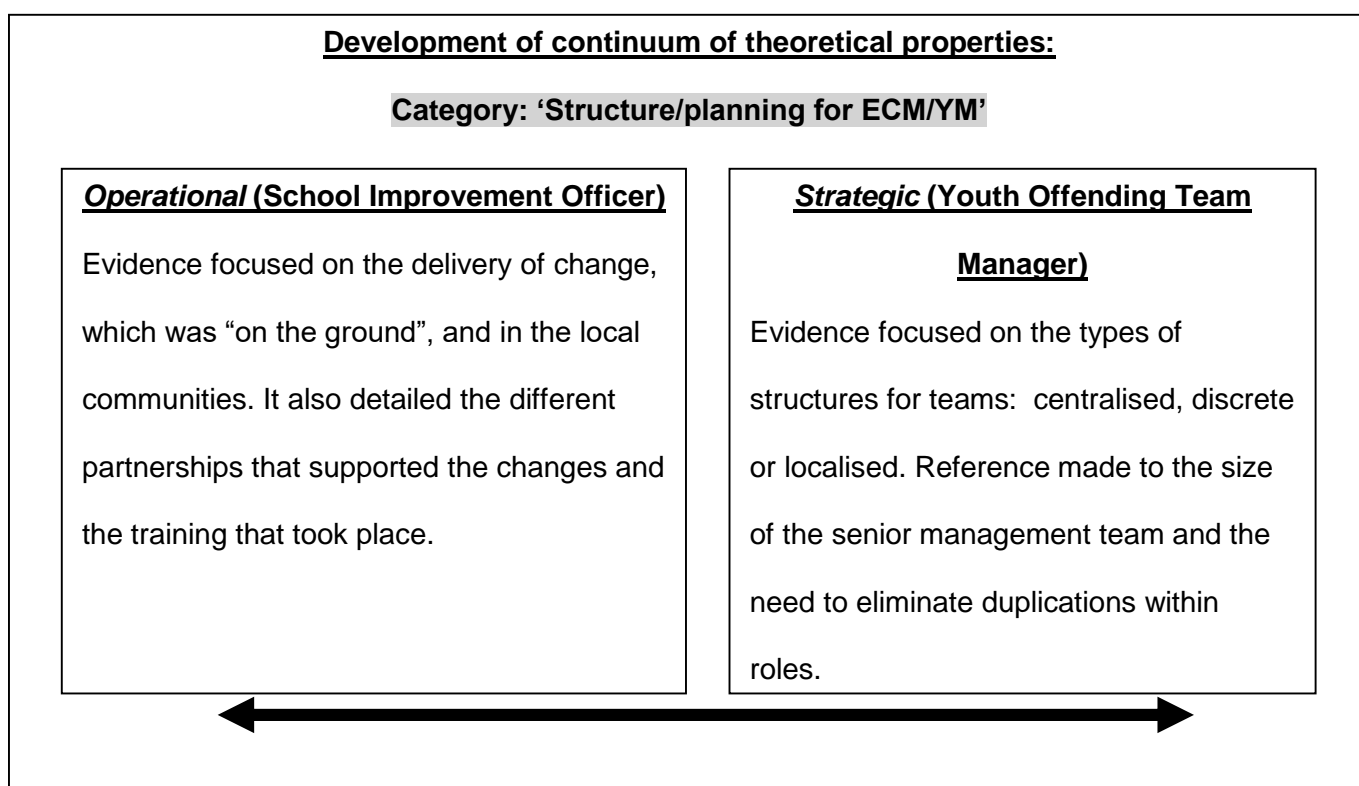
SIO: *“These tend to be teaching assistants, learning mentors – in secondary schools too – and they are located in the more challenging schools and areas.”*

Her comments show how the support for children and young people was actually delivered “on the ground” within the communities and detailed the partnerships that supported this, which gave an altogether more *operational* picture of the aspect of structure.

### **Dimensionalisation of categories.**

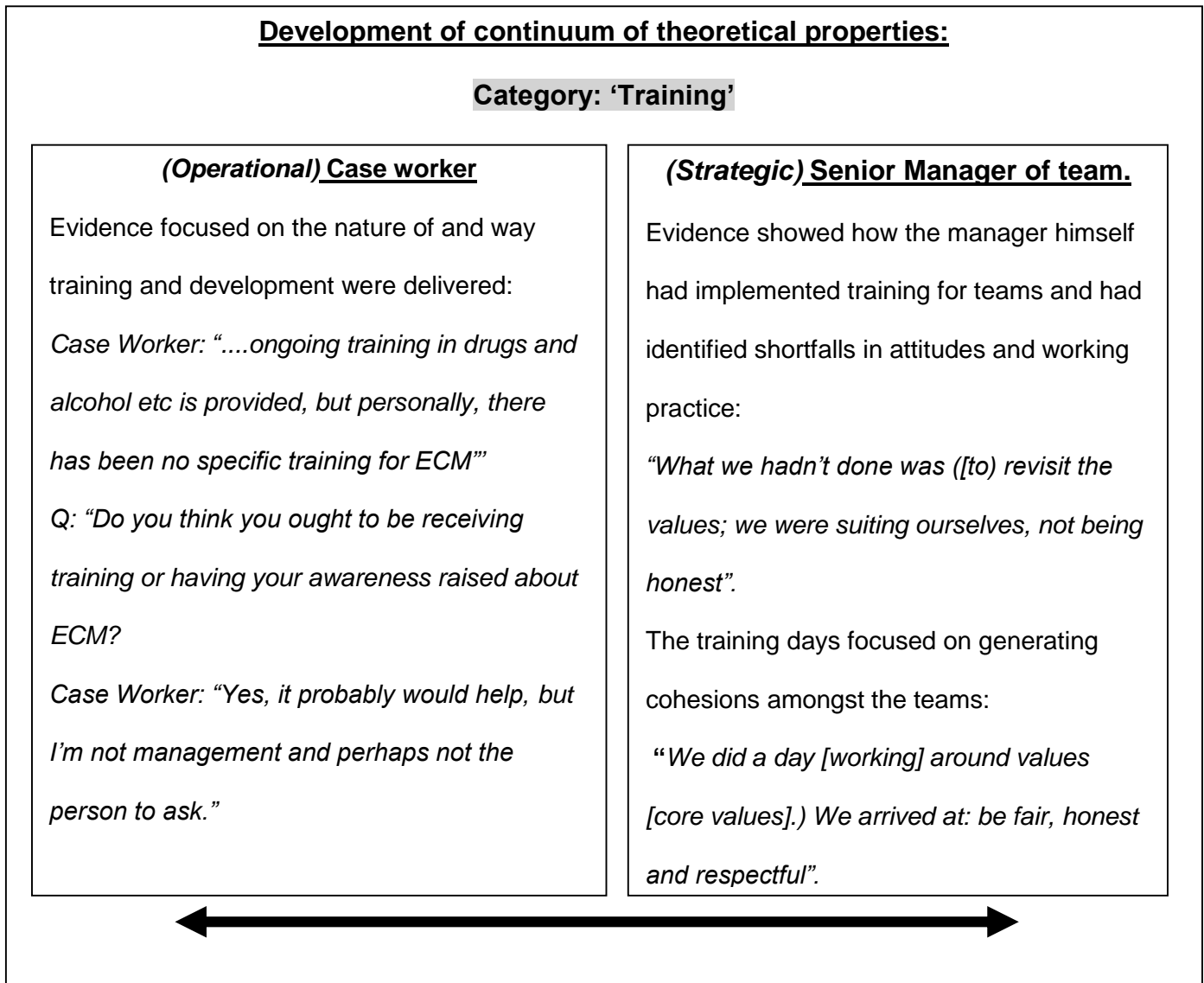
Through this process of constant comparison, a more refined range of theoretical properties was generated for the category of ,for example, 'structure/planning for ECM/YM'. This process opened up to me the many types, dimensions, conditions and nuances of the properties, the “continua of the category” (Glaser and Strauss 2007, pp 106-107), which emerged through the research data. This whole process is shown diagrammatically for two categories, in Diagram 3.6a, Dimensionalising the category of Structure/Planning for ECM/YM and Diagram 3.6b, Dimensionalising the category of Training.

#### **Diagram 3.6a, dimensionalising the category of Structure/Planning for ECM/YM**





**Diagram 3.6 b, dimensionalising the category of Training.**



In these two diagrams, the model of a continuum serves to highlight the polarisation of issues that arose from the analysis of the transcripts of different interviews. Diagram 3.6a uses the data from the interviews from which the quotations are taken and we can see that the evidence from the Education and Youth Offending Team interviews ranges across two distinct sets of properties,

which constitute two poles of the Structure/Planning context - “operational” and “strategic”.

Diagram 3.6b incorporates data from two different interviews, conducted with a Youth Offending Team (YOT) case worker and his manager. The differences that arose in the analyses of these two interviews are even more distinct than those in the previous diagram. The Case Worker deliberately avoids engaging in any sort of discussion about the rationale for training, implying what was on offer was at best peremptory and not particularly allied to the aims of the ECM programme. He was speaking from his own perceptions of training opportunities as a “front line” case worker, pointedly deflecting my question about matching training to the changes in the ECM programme. In direct contrast to this, the manager explains that he had identified a deep-seated need for training amongst the team. He could see that initially there needed to be far more cohesion and cooperation across the team, because existing working practice reflected none of the values and beliefs enshrined in ECM’s aims and outcomes; he could see there was little or no alliance between the ECM aims and those of the professional agency workers. . These two sets of evidence show a clear polarisation of issues that fall into the operational and strategic contexts.

### **Integrating categories and their properties.**

It was at this stage of the Grounded Theory that I found myself moving nearer to understanding how the key findings might begin to emerge from the constant comparison method. As the coding continues, the constant comparison “units,” or the pieces of contextual evidence within the research data “change from comparison of incident with incident to comparison of incident with theoretical

properties of the category,” (Glaser and Strauss p. 108). This process of integration can be illustrated through using the example of another of my categories, which coded as ‘assessment of need.’ After firstly comparing the many incidents that coded as the category of assessment of need, further comparison of these incidents showed the emergence of new, significant factors that implied a possible new category, that of *innovation*. However, on further scrutiny and analysis, I could see that where I was attempting to generate a new, inclusive category - that of “innovation” – I was actually trying to merge, or force together, a cluster of recurring terms from the initial coding; these terms included: *assessment/identification of need*, *triggers of support* and *developing support*, all of which referred to changes in practice or the introduction of new working practice and had been designed in response to ECM’s objectives. These terms were used in the interviews and identified as evidence of support that was effectively targeted at those children and young people who were the most in need/vulnerable and which were newly introduced in the wake of ECM. Some examples of these terms, and others similar, identified in the interview transcripts, are shown below:

Local Authority D, Multi Agency Professional Health: “When I came into post, one of the things I had to do was look at the document about changing the health assessment it had all been done by doctors in hospital – one of my main roles was to change that so that school nurses, myself and health visitors were doing them”. (Coded originally as ‘identification of need’).

Local Authority G, YOT Manager: “One of the extra developments we’ve tried to roll out as an alternative means has been targeting support around schools in

*the Bortley<sup>1</sup> area. We've used the schools as a focus."* (Coded originally as 'developing support').

*Local Authority G, YOT Manager:* *"It was called targeted youth support, it's now called early intervention".* (Coded originally as 'triggers of support').

*Local Authority C, YOT Manager:* *"POPOS (Prolific and other Priority Offenders Scheme) came out in the summer of 2004"....very important to the ECM outcome of safe ...enjoy and achieve, and to some extent as well, health".* (Coded originally as 'triggers of support').

*Local Authority D, Multi Agency Professional Health:* *"As far as Child Protection cases were concerned – if children needed home visits it was left to the health visitor to chase that up. Now the school nurses are getting involved – that was a management issue, it was found that school nurses weren't involved with home visits as much as they should have been.* (Coded originally as 'assessment of need').

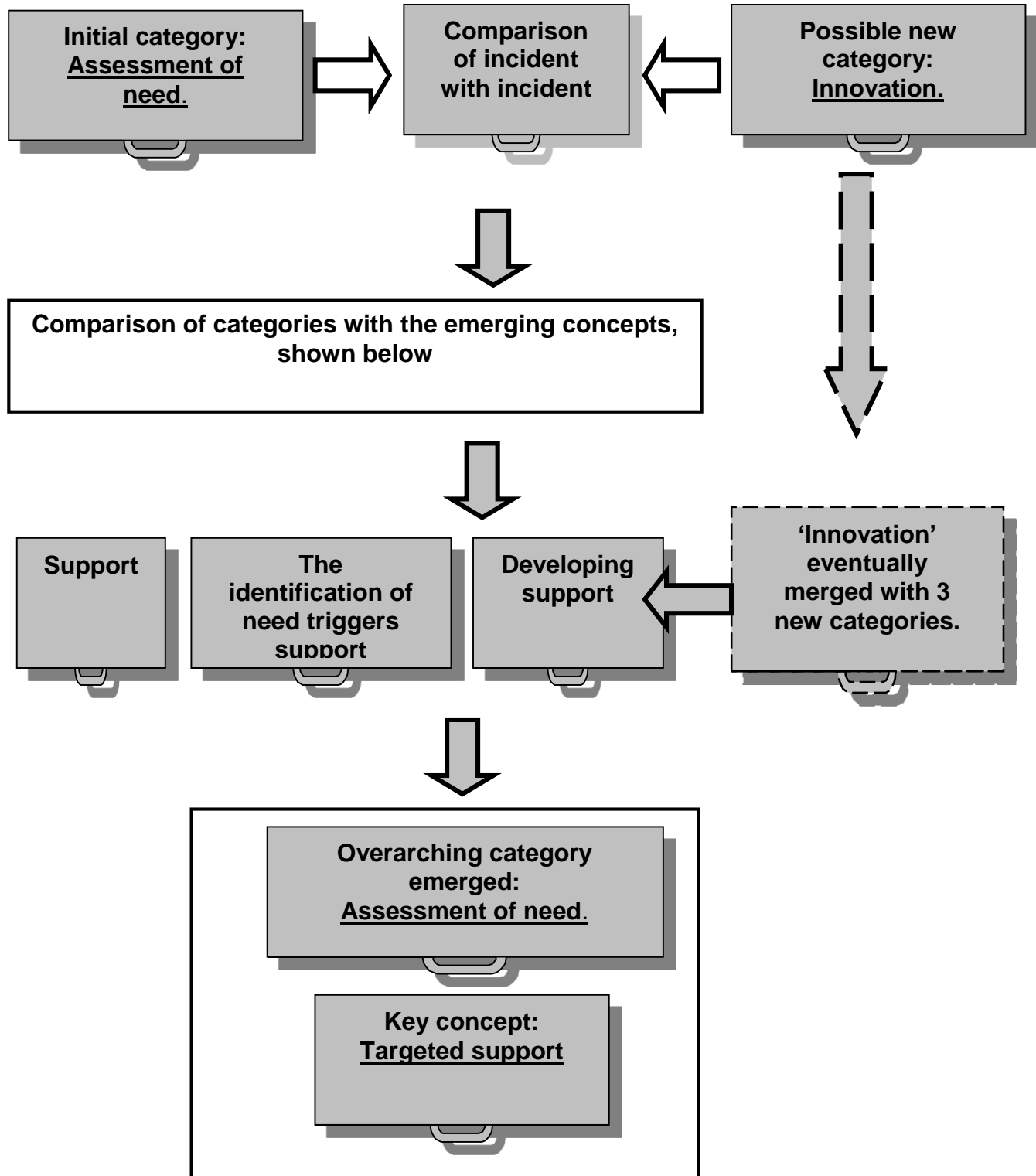
These four new categories in turn were compared with the further descriptions (within the data) of how support was tailored (or not) to best match the needs of children and young people across the different divisions within local authorities (and indeed across different local authorities). From this, I could sharpen up the classification of these several categories to one - that of *targeted support*. This was because through the constant comparison method, I could see that where the incidents of 'targeted support' recurred throughout the data and across different groups of respondents, these corresponded to the circumstances of the three, new categories. This process is what Glaser and Strauss describe as the "diverse properties starting to become integrated, resulting in "a unified whole"

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<sup>1</sup> Fictitious name

(p. 109). I can interpret this process as articulating the *theoretical properties* (which are seen above in Diagrams 3.6a and 3.6b) through integrating the (coded) categories. Through this process, the delineation of the emerging, integrated categories becomes more distinct. This is shown in Diagram 3.7, integrating the categories

Diagram 3.7, integrating the categories.



### **Delimiting the theory.**

Through engaging in these processes of the constant comparison method I began to see how my analysis was reducing the categories and concepts so they became more concentrated and, as a result, reflected more closely the characteristics and essence of the research data. Although this first research study is not of the scale of Glaser and Strauss' work, nonetheless this distillation process, I felt, matched their description of the researcher "tapping to the fullest extent the in vivo patterns of integration in the data itself" (Glaser and Strauss 2007, p.109).

After analysing the interview transcripts I wrote out, in longhand, the findings from each of the interviews in a large table format that developed out of Diagram 3.5, Coding for Categories: layout for recording data by hand. From this I identified some 12 overarching categories and many sub concepts and, subsequently, many overlaps and duplications within the data. Through further analysis I was able to reduce the number of main categories to four, and between eight and ten concepts for each category. This process is what Glaser and Strauss describe as "taking out non-relevant properties...integrating details of properties...and – most important – reduction" (ibid. p.110).

Further comparison and analysis gave rise to further reduction until I was satisfied I had pinpointed the most original and significant data with which to consider drawing out my hypotheses or findings.

The final set of research data I produced from the above analysis, contained three key issues, which had their origins in both the original categories and concepts. I was pleased with this outcome because each of the issues clearly

reflected (as a result of applying the analytic tools) an integration of the data and had extracted the most significant elements from the research data. Glaser and Strauss refer to these elements of the data (categories and properties of categories) as “elements of theory” (ibid. p.42).

My final task was to *induct*, from these elements of theory the findings that would set the direction for my second research study. The results of this induction are included in Chapter 4, Analysis of findings from Research Study 1.



### **3.11. Reflections on applying grounded theory tools for analysis.**

Whilst reading Glaser and Strauss's book (2007) on the discovery of grounded theory, I initially pondered the actual process of articulating and writing a theory as it emerges from the analysis. At which point does the theory emerge? For my first research study I could see that, as a consequence of the nature of the qualitative data I had captured, I needed to apply an analytic process that would enable me to extract/identify a set of findings that had sufficient rigour to substantiate the meaning of the data, rather than seeking to generate a "theory". Having decided that the aims for and purpose of the first research study were best served by using a grounded theory approach to the analysis, I was selecting, adapting and adopting its guidelines (as discussed in Section 3.9) to inform my studies and analysis of the data, not simply invoking "grounded theory as a methodological rationale to justify conducting qualitative research" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 177-178). Charmaz (2006) discusses the practical uses of grounded theory that "give us analytic tools and methodological strategies we can adopt without endorsing a prescribed theory of knowledge or view of reality" (ibid, p. 177). This endorses my own reasons for choosing the grounded theory approach and supports my aim to "elicit my own categories of information from the data" and to avoid having to "shoehorn....data into a 'received scientific hypothesis'" (see Section 3.8).

When I initially read about grounded theory I developed a significant understanding of its processes through a slightly unusual sequence of experiential learning events. I firstly applied the separate stages of the methodology mechanically and as outlined in the book; then I took time to read

the explanations and analyses in closer detail. Glaser and Strauss write about the whole process of “dimensionalising” the categories and concepts and of integrating (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p.106) the theoretical properties of the data. These processes ultimately serve to produce a new theory (for them) that is effectively crystallised out of (or becomes grounded in) the original data. I understood this at first as the researcher simply reading back the information from the data, which then of an instant became the emergent theory; it seemed to be merely a case of cutting and pasting the emerging categories and concepts together into a newly created “jigsaw”, which , when read back, articulated the new theory. This was before I had thought further about the skill of induction and how to draw out a finding/idea/strategy from the constituent factors and elements.

### **3.12. Understanding the process of induction.**

To understand better the process of *induction* (the process by which Glaser and Strauss arrive at their discovery of theory) of findings from my data analysis, I referred back to a similar inductive process used in the Ashridge “Diamond”, or Mission Model for Strategy, which I had encountered during my MBA studies. This model shows four key stages of the process of constructing a strategy for an organisation. The first three stages incorporate different sets of elements that underpin significantly the rationale of the organisation. Through the processes of integration and inference, which take place between these sets of elements, an articulation, or induction, of the strategic position of the organisation is arrived at in the fourth stage, (see Diagram 3.8: The Ashridge Diamond, a model for

strategy). In this diagram, the two-headed block arrows outside the central diamond show that the process of inducting a strategy is iterative, ensuring that when constructing a strategy the decision-makers reflect on and incorporate the changes that occur at each stage of the organisation's evolution over time. The two-headed arrows inside the diamond (intersecting at right angles) show how the changes that occur to the elements at each of the stages are mutually influential. The iterative process is therefore continual (rather than continuous). That is to say that the iteration should occur at regular intervals, in order to take account of the constant interaction and mutual influence between and across the four sets of elements. In this way, if the organisation chooses to revisit its mission statement each year, the constituent elements of the two major contributory areas (Values and Beliefs and Professional Boundaries) should reflect the changes as they occur across these areas. If change is introduced to, say, the area of professional boundaries, then the impact of this on the other areas should be reflected accordingly.

I was inclined towards developing a model of the way I had adapted and applied the grounded theory process after reading a research paper in British Education Research Journal, (Briggs, 2007). Her article was entitled "The use of modelling for theory building in qualitative analysis." However, it was the content of her abstract that interested me particularly. She discussed the practical usefulness of constructing a model from the process of her research that could "be used as both a conceptual and a practical tool in this field of study (educational management) enabling both the construction of theory and the process of organisational development and decision-making" (Briggs, 2007, p.589). I hope

that the model below might be of similar use, as a practical research tool for consideration by other qualitative researchers or practitioners.

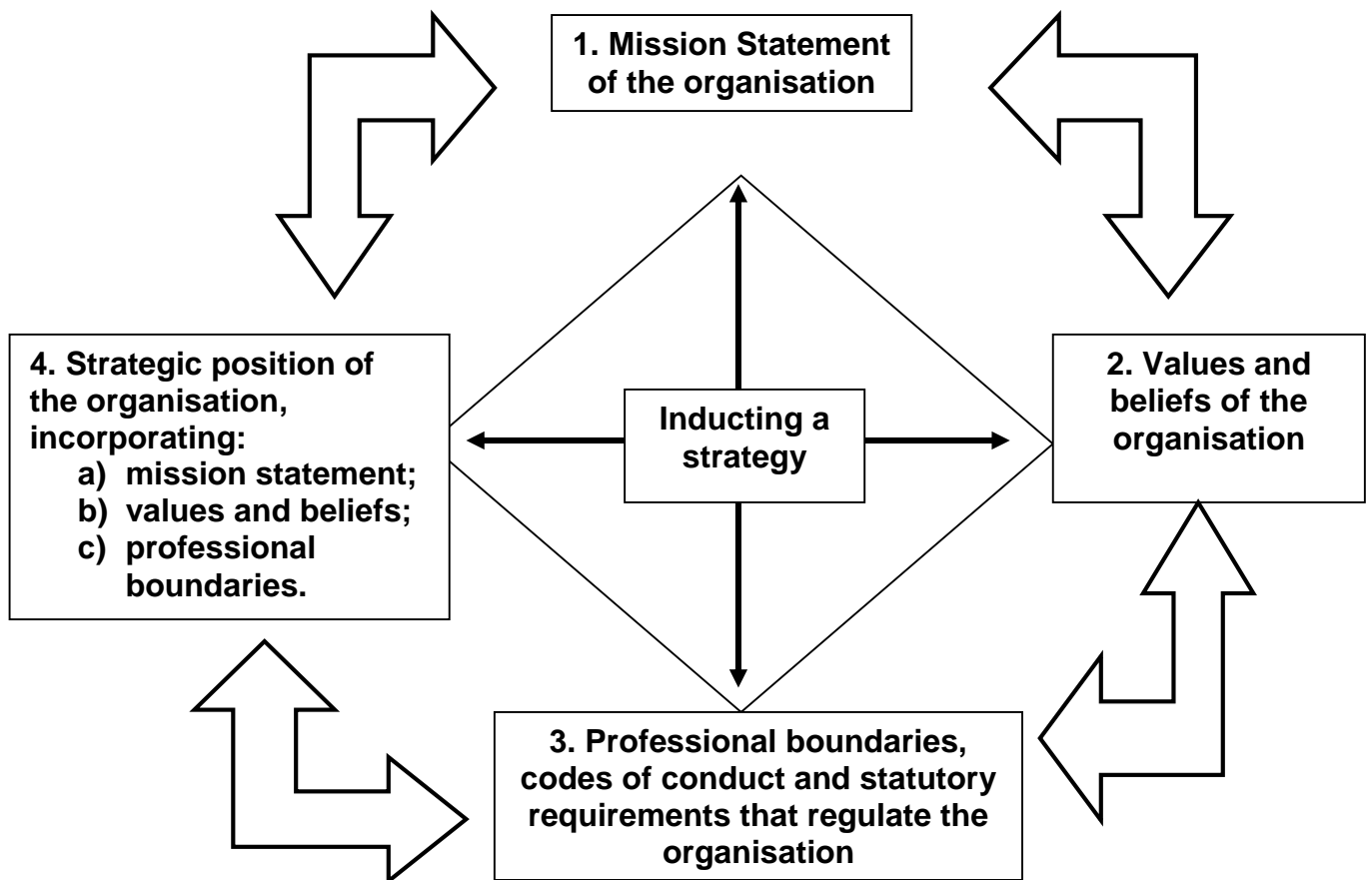
In Diagram 3.9: The application of Grounded Theory research processes, based on the Ashridge Mission Model for Strategy, I have adapted the model to show how I applied the grounded theory tools to the analysis of the research data.

There is an interesting difference between the two models shown in Diagrams 3.8 and 3.9. In the first, the whole process of constructing an organisational strategy is represented as iterative and the elements that contribute to it are always in a state of organisational “flux,” exerting an inevitable, mutual influence on and between one another. In my adapted model, (Diagram 3.9), we can see that iteration occurs only as a discrete process and at just two of the stages: “the construction of categories” and “processes,” (in which the specific analytic tools of grounded theory are applied). The iteration is the outcome of the application of the grounded theory tools. At the top of the diagram (Stage 1), I coded for categories before and after the research study, re-visiting the original categories and making adjustments in response to the emergence of new aspects and ideas from the “language of the research” (Glaser and Strauss, 2007, p. 107). At stage 2, repetition of my analysis enabled me to reduce the number of categories and concepts to those that reflected the core of the research data. The main difference between Diagrams 3.8 and 3.9 is that in 3.9, each stage reflects the results of the analysis and it is this that suggests the *progression* onto the next stage, rather than the evolving circumstances at each stage affecting/changing those that come before and after.

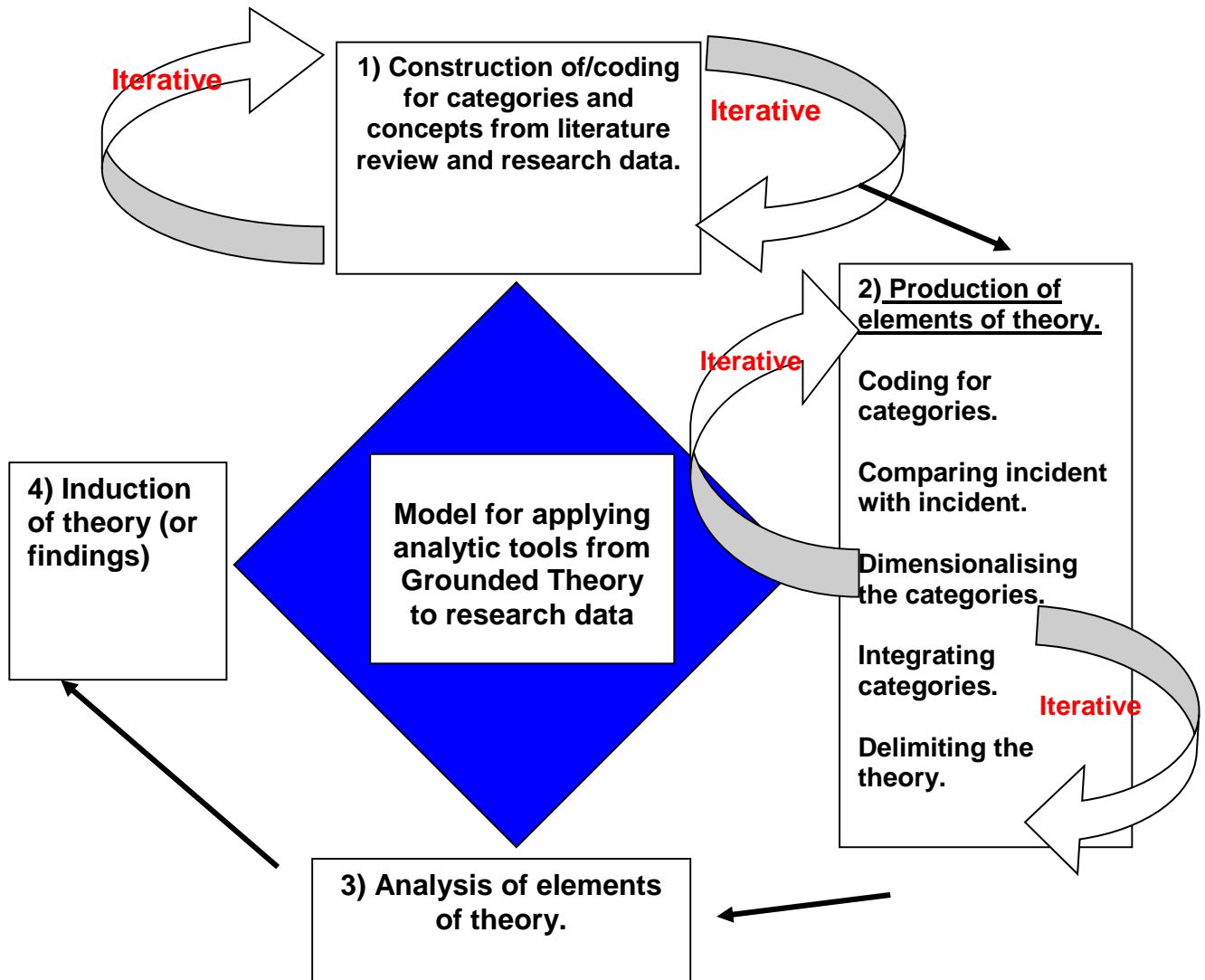
The three findings I inducted from the first research study served to direct me towards the starting point for the second research study and a completely new

conceptual framework. This would seem to contradict the suggestion that “modernist qualitative researchers share with quantitative investigators a concern for the nature of the relationship between their discovered facts and the observable world these purport to explain” (Locke, 2001, p. 12). What Locke seems to be suggesting here is that qualitative researchers seek a cause and effect relationship between the outcomes of their research and their particular field of study. This was not my objective for the first research study, but rather to induct a set of findings from the data analysis that would substantiate the meaning of the data, which is quite contrary to using the data to infer any direct, quantifiable causal linkages (between, for example, the experiences of a Youth Offending Team case worker and the achievement gap that exists for children and young people across the socio-economic spectrum). I hope to be able to identify from my analysis further concepts and aspects related to welfare provision and need, which are significant to the data and will develop my research question further.

**Diagram 3.8: The Ashridge Diamond – A Mission Model for strategy.**



**Diagram 3.9: The application of Grounded Theory research processes, based on the Ashridge Mission Model for Strategy.**



## **Summary.**

In this chapter I have outlined the research design for the first research study and discussed the events that led me to conduct two research studies of equal significance, rather than calling the first a Pilot Study and the second a Final Research Study. I have detailed the significance of the conceptual framework to the structuring of key categories for consideration in the data analysis and as an appropriate theoretical background/context within and from which I can develop my arguments and findings from the research data.

I also consider some of the ethical implications of conducting research and lines of discussion such as how research participants are judged to be competent to make decisions about giving their consent to take part.

I explain my choice of applying the grounded theory approach to analysing the data from research study 1 and the different analytic tools I used, such as the constant comparison method, which includes coding for categories and the dimensionalisation and integration of categories. I selected the grounded theory approach to analysis because I needed to apply processes that would enable me to identify a set of findings that had sufficient rigour to substantiate the meaning of the data, rather than to generate a “theory”, as espoused by Glaser and Strauss, or to establish any causal linkages between the research data and the “observable world” as suggested by Locke (2001).

In Chapter 4, Analysis of Findings from Research Study 1, I list the three findings I inducted from the data analysis and discuss each in turn, in relation to the categories and concepts from within the data and from the literature.



## CHAPTER 4.

### 4. Analysis of Findings from Research Study (1)

The findings from this research study inspired me to conduct a further Literature review that formed an important part of my interpretation of the analysis. The literature incorporated research papers and evaluations that had been conducted for several ECM/YM programmes for change, such as Early Excellence Centres and Sure Start and these served to enrich the contextual and theoretical framework of the research study and inform further my own arguments in relation to the analysis of the data. It also directed me towards a consideration of the broader issue of social policy; the influence of “third way” government strategy on the welfare reforms that have taken place in this country over the last ten or eleven years and that underpinned the changes pronounced in the ECM/YM programmes. I have incorporated issues arising from this subsequent literature review here, alongside my analyses.

#### 4.1. Finding 1 .

*“We have a number of “looked after” young people who’ve done the alternative curriculum and done exceptionally well. But I can’t tick any boxes next to their names – it’s not counted”. (Local authority D Multi-Agency Professional)*

**Table 4.1. Elements of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2007) emerging from analysis of data from Research Study (1): Finding 1.**

	<b>Elements of theory .</b>
<b>Element 1</b>	Leadership and management: national, government systems have generated centralised performance indicators for assessment and evaluation.
<b>Element 2</b>	Different types of indicators are used to trigger support for children and young people, evaluate their achievement and assess vulnerability.
<p style="text-align: center;">Finding 1.</p> <p>a) The application of centralised, prescribed performance indicators alone does not probe cohorts (of children and young people) sufficiently to ensure that vulnerability is identified according to a child's changing circumstances; neither does it guarantee neither does it guarantee timely intervention/support when they are most in need of it, or the effective evaluation of provision.</p> <p>b) The intelligent use of "hard" and "soft" data (by welfare agencies) helps to pinpoint/identify need and vulnerability amongst children, young people and their families as their circumstances change.</p>	

#### **4.1.1. Discussion of Finding 1: supported by the research data.**

Aspect (a) of Findings 1 emerged as significant outcome from the Research Study data. In one authority it appeared that the systems in place that enabled the identification of the most vulnerable and needy children and young people were ineffectual and lacked rigour when it came to targeting support for those

young people who might be at risk of offending, because of their home and personal circumstances.

**Box 4.1.**

**Youth offending team manager (G):** *“One of the extra developments we’ve tried to roll out as an alternative means (of referring young people in need of support) has been targeting support around schools in the Bortley area”:*

**Q:** *“Has this been a ‘preventionist’ or ‘interventionist’ initiative?”*

**Youth offending team manager (G):** *“It rests on comment. If you look at the socio--economic factors on a ward basis, Bortley doesn’t come out as a particularly needy area. But about 5 years ago, we did some analysis for a national charity. The question was, where do you (the YOT team) want to target resources, where’s the need? So we used primary schools as a community base. We took a whole range of data (Free School Meals, Ethnic Minority Groups, gender, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATS\* results, Looked After Children – LACs) and we had about 30 schools that were below a certain level. As a result we got the usual suspects that are in an area of most pressing deprivation.*

*What also showed up were pockets around other parts of the borough....that also had quite pressing need. For example, 2 or 3 primary schools in that sense (of deprivation factors). This enabled us to focus activities in some of the areas that people wouldn’t necessarily have said needed support, because if you look at the ward, these factors are camouflaged. We used that as a basis for intervention by the charity. When we (next) looked at Bortley from an educational point of view, how do you focus your work onto the most vulnerable kids?”*

*[Transcript GYOT, page 2 – 3)]*

*\*Standard Attainment Tests.*

## **Vulnerability: “knowing” it or prescribing it?**

The outcome of the analysis of data conducted by the YOT team (explained in Box 4.1) was the Vulnerability Index (Appendix Table A1.2) developed by the primary schools in a local ward called Bortley (not the real name) with the encouragement of the YOT.

### **Box 4.2.**

**Youth offending team manager (G):** *“We used the results of the analysis ....and built it indirectly into some of the work being done with the behaviour management programme – this (involved) virtually the same schools.*

*We asked schools - what sort of factors (do) you think allow you to identify children as vulnerable? What’s your gut reaction? Some responses were about attainment, attendance, separation anxieties, violence in the home...emotional relationships. We included peers and adults; for example, ‘is there a warm relationship between parents and child’? – emotional warmth being one of the key things we were asking about. Very subjective but (we said), you know the kids and know what makes you concerned.*

**Q:** *You got them to tell you all (about) the subjective issues - as well as the ‘hard’ factors/data - the background of all the young people.*

**Youth offending team manager (G):** *When I was in education, it was attendance, behaviour and exclusion. The stereotypical response of all the schools was always ‘well, I could have told you that from when they were 3 years old’. So we were saying put your money where your mouth is and tell us who they are and let’s do something about it. Schools felt vulnerable and isolated and that they were the only ones who had concerns about (a certain) this child – that’s their perception”.*

[Transcript GYOT, (pages 4 – 5)]

Its main function, as an index of vulnerability factors , was as a tool to help staff in schools to identify aspects of vulnerability in children and young people at the critical times in their lives when, for example , their personal circumstances change and can put them at risk of becoming vulnerable. The Audit was created to improve on the existing means that schools and other agencies have at their disposal to identify vulnerability (and under-achievement) in children and young people. The government currently provides a set of 198 National Indicators and these are used as benchmarks by Local Authorities and Local authority Partnerships, Communities and Local Government (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government 2008a) in their own self evaluation documentation. As part of this process they enter a "score" against each indicator and the judgements for these are informed by their ongoing self-evaluation and previous judgements made by the relevant inspectorates. These National Indicators are mostly quantitative and focus on performance data in examinations and tests and other statistical data such as attendance and hospital admissions, with a handful of exceptions.

In Box 4.2, the YOT manager from local authority discusses examples of data that support the two aspects, (a) and (b), from Finding 1. These examples of data reflect the perceptions of the youth offending team and local primary schools (in local authority G) with regard to the effectiveness of the national, prescribed performance indicators. In their view the National Indicators were not successfully probing "cohorts (of children and young people) sufficiently to ensure that vulnerability was identified according to a child's changing circumstances" (Finding 1a). It also explains the origins of the strategy adopted by the two agencies (the Youth Offending Team and primary schools in this

case) to improve on this, the creation of the Vulnerability Audit. The audit demonstrated how the “intelligent use of hard and soft data” was employed most effectively to “help pinpoint/identify need and vulnerability amongst children, young people and their families”, especially in geographic areas where deprivation was not obviously apparent. One of the comments made by the Youth Offending manager raises an important issue that may give a indication to why centralised Indicators lack rigour in probing cohorts of children for signs of vulnerability: *“you know the kids and know what makes you concerned”*. In this statement he has almost explained the inexplicable. If knowing what makes a child vulnerable is most effectively known by the teachers of that child, it implies just how complex and sensitive the process of identifying vulnerability is. Teachers of primary children have a high level of contact with the same children and their contextual circumstances every day, throughout the school year. They come to know and understand some of the most intimate aspects of a child’s life and are best placed to judge the nuances of a child’s behaviour and responses that might indicate changes in their emotional life and home background. It is being able to recognise these changes in behaviour and demeanour that are so important in alerting a school to the possible problems at home (such as abuse, anxiety, illness or violence), which render a child vulnerable. Such indications and alarms were apparently missing in the tragic cases of Victoria Climbié and Baby P<sup>2</sup>. In the light of these cases, (in which the extent to which the children were at risk was not registered) it is feasible to suggest that the application of a set of centralised Performance Indicators may fall short when it comes to

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<sup>2</sup> Both children lived in the Borough of Haringey and both lost their lives to abusive parents/carers.

identifying cases of vulnerability that are *not obviously apparent* through a child's/young person's demeanour. The new set of indicators contained in the Vulnerability Index recognized many of the different forms of vulnerability that can be identifiable through a child's behaviour and responses in his/her daily life, most of which went beyond those identified through the "hard" or measurable data used in their National Performance Indicators. They included aspects such as bereavement or separation anxieties and engagement with the family. Therefore a whole new framework was pioneered that helped the schools and YOT agencies to work together and identify a number of children and their families who clearly had need of support, but historically had not "scored" the requisite number of indicators to trigger support/intervention programmes.

Furthermore, aspects within the Vulnerability Index serve to support Finding 2 (a), targeted support, and Finding 3, multiagency working, (see below, Sections 4.2 and 4.3). The YOT agency encouraged and worked with the primary schools to create the Vulnerability Index; this effective integration of services brought about improved processes of identifying vulnerability, which resulted in better targeted support for the children. This evidence demonstrates how closely categories across the three Findings are linked and that we should not consider each of the Findings as separate issues or categories, but rather as inter-related aspects of the complex state of being that constitutes "personal welfare", which is at the heart of the ECM programme.

## **Measuring performance – what counts?**

Research data to support Finding 1 (a) also came from the interviews I conducted in another local authority, D, with a team of multi agency welfare professionals who were dedicated to the care of Looked After Children (LAC's). The data from these interviews refer to the inappropriateness of the National Indicators with which local authorities (and their inspectorate, Ofsted) are required to judge/evaluate the effectiveness of their provision (and, by implication, that of the local authority) for looked after children and young people.

Examples of three of the National Indicators that relate to Looked After Children (LAC's) are:

National Indicator 61: Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption;

National Indicator 62: Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements.

National Indicator 63: Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement. (Placements here are defined as placements in foster homes, not residential care homes).

The majority of the National Indicators, as mentioned above, are quantitative and based on amounts, lengths of time, numbers and percentages. The multi agency professionals in local authority D question the effectiveness of the “box ticking” nature of these indicators in Boxes 4.3 and 4.4. In Box 4.3, the multi agency manager is questioning the nature of the quantitative indicators used to measure the effectiveness of provision (in particular National Indicator 63,



above, “stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement). He refers to the fact that the National Indicator only measures the stability of placements of looked after children in foster placements, not for those who are

**Box 4.3**

**Q:** *“What kind of model of success do you strive for with the LAC’s (Looked After Children) so that they go on to get jobs or homes (of their own)?*

**Multiagency manager, residential care homes:** *“They (the welfare professionals) strive to keep the stability of the placements for the LAC’s ....the same with the stability of education. Even if a child does have to move, we try to see that the school is maintained for as long as possible or for ever. ....it’s just unfortunate that sometimes a child has to move, or the foster carers move. It hasn’t been easy, because of issues to do with transport, but we’ve tried to maintain the schools. This means some travelling big distances. An indicator is to do with foster placements. We’ve got a few (residential) homes where young people have been there for a long time, but that doesn’t get counted in figures or anything. You know, they’ve been in a residential home and very, very stable there but it’s not recognised”.*

[Transcript DMA (pages 16 – 17)].

looked after in a residential home. As a consequence, the long term, very stable placements of looked after children in residential homes in local authority D do not “get counted in figures or anything....it’s not recognised”.

We discussed further, similar comments about this aspect in our interview, taking the discussion a stage further to consider how the *achievement* of Looked

After Children (considered to be the most vulnerable of groups) is judged by local authorities and the inspectorate (further links with Finding 1(a), which refers to the effectiveness of the indicators used to measure performance). In Box 4.4, the comments made by the multi agency professional reflect the whole team's opinion that judgements (made by the local authority and Ofsted) on the achievement of the young people in their care are based on outcomes that do not accurately reflect the overall progress the young people are making. The comments also show how the constraints imposed by the narrowness of the National Indicators can make it difficult for welfare professionals to make judgements on the successes achieved by young people that are *not*

**Box 4.4.**

**Multi agency Professional:** *"Considering times have moved on....curriculum are supposed to be more flexible – we actually have a number of LAC's who've done an alternative curriculum who've done exceptionally well. But I can't tick any boxes next to their names – it's not counted.*

*I personally find it very frustrating, because, like you said, a lot of people, they sit there and they go, 'oh but they (the young people) didn't do this and didn't do that'.*

*But they did actually did attend and they've gone to that course. There was a music course for which there was no accreditation (in terms of a measurement corresponding to a National Indicator) - but they turned up on that day....*

*I think (there's) a lack of understanding on the part of the teachers/lecturers that getting up in the morning, getting dressed, getting the appropriate clothes on and getting....there when you've had hell (in the residential care home) until 2 o'clock in the morning..[is a considerable achievement].".*

[Transcript DMA, pages 21 - 22)]

quantifiable or measurable. In her comments the multi agency professional

explains how frustrated she is that there is nowhere that she can record the achievement of several of the young people in her care.

What they had achieved did not “tally” with any of the prescribed, quantitative measurement indicators available that contributed to performance in this aspect of welfare provision. This evidence from the research data indicates how the use of National Indicators, to account for young people’s achievement (referring to the third ECM outcome: “enjoy and achieve”) within the five outcomes of the ECM programme (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Government, 2003c, p. 21), might actually be obscuring the reality of the outcomes of provision within the different agencies. It implies that successful outcomes of provision are being missed (and similarly, inadequate outcomes misinterpreted as adequate), because a *quantifiable outcome* is what is measured, not the underlying factors that may well be *qualitative*. In Box 4.4, the professional is discussing just such a set of qualitative factors with reference to the young people in her care – all of whom came from chaotic and fragmented backgrounds. The point she makes is that there, the evaluation process for children and young people’s services incorporates no formal recognition of “achievement” when it is evident in behavioural outcomes, such as attending a course or regular vocational training courses outside school. But such outcomes for these vulnerable young people are no less significant than the quantitative measures of success, such as those included in the following indicators:

National Indicator 100: Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 (end of primary education).

National Indicator 101: Looked after children achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE’s.

National Indicator 106: Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education.

According to the multi agency team interviewed, the looked after young people referred to in Box 4.4 would undoubtedly have scored low in the three National Indicators 100,101 and 106. But they had nonetheless achieved well in their attitudes and behaviour regarding the alternative curriculum referred they were following. This curriculum initiative is part of the Increased Flexibility Programme (launched by the Department for Education and Skills in 2002). Its aim was to support partnerships of schools, further education (FE) colleges and providers of work-based learning, to improve vocational learning opportunities for 14-16 year-olds, with the longer term objective of keeping more over-16s in education and training. Some of the young Looked After people in Local authority D had done exceptionally well in participating in this alternative curriculum, as the multi agency professional commented, *“but I can’t tick any boxes next to their names – it’s not counted”*. In their professional judgement, the multi agency team consider the very fact that these youngsters had attended the course, not truanted or been excluded from college, was a huge achievement when compared to how they had behaved previously:

Multi agency Professional: *“a lot of these kids are not on school rolls (they had been excluded early on, at primary and secondary level) so the children coming through wouldn’t have gone to school...but we’ve been able to pull everyone on board...”*. Transcript DMA p.20.

This indicates that despite very good recent levels of achievement compared with their earlier school life, nowhere can credit be given to the youngsters (and the welfare professionals) for good performance in these other, non-quantifiable

areas, because the Indicators only recognise the “hard” data targets such as those in the examples given above.

#### **4.1.2. Discussion of Finding 1: supported by the literature.**

Professor Peter Moss (Great Britain. DfES 2005 b, paragraph 138), [in the section entitled “Accurately measuring attainment of outcomes”] comments generally on the definition of *outcomes*, as defined in the original ECM/YM Green Paper. He raises the issue that, “Targets and outcomes can be treated as purely managerial tools, without appreciating that these are necessarily contestable in a democratic and pluralist society, because they raise important and ethical issues. For example, why is the outcome ‘being healthy’ described [...] in terms of avoiding negative behaviours? Or why is ‘enjoying and achieving’ reduced to *school* achievement?” This would support the last point in the above section ‘*Measuring performance – what counts*’?

Professor Moss’ comments also raise a further question. Should judgements of provision and the assessment of need (of the most vulnerable children, young people and their families) be controlled by/limited to the use of managerial tools such as centrally prescribed targets, which are specifically designed to match the government’s prescribed outcomes that relate to its Public Service Agreements?

#### **National Indicators: their limitations in performance management.**

Issues related to Finding 1 (b) were raised in two of the evaluation papers I appraised. One of them was an evaluation of a local Sure Start programme in the North East of England and involved 32 professionals, volunteers, support workers and administrators working in a multi-agency inter-disciplinary team. For

the purposes of research, the programme is given the pseudonym Mazebrook (Bagley et al. 2004). The programme manager of the Sure Start programme was fully aware of the need for audit and “pre-specified, nationally imposed targets” and did not perceive these as “inhibiting the interdisciplinary bottom-up vision” but rather that they could be “accommodated within it” (ibid. P.11). This also suggests that the programme manager had a strategy of working with these imposed targets, in much the same way that the local authority in Section 4.1, ‘Vulnerability: “knowing” it or prescribing it?’ created the Vulnerability Audit. Such a positive approach was undoubtedly a major contributory factor to the successful establishment of the multi-disciplinary team at this particular Sure Start Centre, suggesting that this success was achieved *despite* the government’s imposed system of performance management, rather than

**Box 4.5.**

*“All pilot EECs are monitored by OfSTED but best practice, should go beyond minimal standards. Moving beyond minimal standards is helped by centres embracing quality improvement and assurance procedures that ensure ongoing review and improvement. Other practical means of achieving quality include having a clear staff induction programme, a focus on practice and organisational improvement and thorough staff review procedures. The importance of real world, practitioner research and evaluation which helps to develop innovatory, evidenced based practice is emphasised.*

[Bertram et al. 2001-2002, p. 10].

because of it.

In the annual evaluation of an Early Excellence Centre (ECC) Pilot Programme

(Bertram et al. 2001-2002), monitoring and inspection were addressed critically by the evaluators in their summary, part of which is reproduced in Box 4.5. Their comments are critical of the limitations of the monitoring and evaluation (of the EEC's) by Ofsted, asserting that they merely ensure compliance with minimal standards, rather than contributing to the further development and progression of the Centres. The evaluators go on to suggest strategies that would, if implemented, enable development and progression and these suggestions resonate with the reasons that motivated local authority G to create the Vulnerability Audit. The EEC evaluators and the schools and youth offending team in authority G (Box 4.2) both saw the need to improve on the centralised tools of evaluation, for the purposes of raising the level of performance in supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families. Each of the 6 pilot EECs that had experienced an Ofsted inspection during the evaluation period indicated the large amounts of time and resources involved. The two comments in Box 4.6 are typical of the criticisms made by the EEC professionals (in interviews with the evaluators of the pilot EEC's) who describe their Ofsted inspections as something that had been "done to" them rather than as a process of sharing and understanding the values and rationale of the programmes. These quotes demonstrate the degree to which both the programme evaluators and the welfare professionals considered the centralised performance indicators, on which Ofsted based its judgements, to be inadequate. Indeed, they perceived that the inspection process did not appear to match the aims, purposes and rationale of the Early Excellence programme. This highlights a conflict between the government's conceptualisation of ECM welfare reforms, rooted in integrating the provision of services and the

eradication of social exclusion, and *the ways in which they are evaluated*, or the performance indicators on which evaluation is based. This raises again the mismatch between the nature of prescribed, centralised Performance Indicators and the highly complex range of attributes they measure; this further supports Finding 1(a) and the underlying principle of Finding1 (b).

**Box 4.6.**

*“The OfSTED inspection has been an arduous, lengthy process which is still not complete. In theory this ought not to have loomed as large as it did, but the scale of the preparation needed, the nature of the process and some seeming mismatches between the attitudes, values and parameters of the inspection team and those of the centre staff led to considerable stress....*

*“The experience of the centre was that in these respects the inspection had deficiencies, with the inevitable result that it was experienced as a serious challenge to some of the centre’s approaches and values”.*

[Bertram et al. 2001-2002, p. 73].



## 4.2. Findings 2.

*“I think we’re much more effective at integrating services where there is targeted or specialist provision – but less so where there are universal services in operation”. (School Improvement Officer, local authority G).*

**Table 4.2: Elements of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2007) emerging from analysis of data from Research Study (1): Finding 2.**

	Elements of theory.
<b>Element 1</b>	Assessment of the needs of children and young people.
<b>Element 2</b>	Targeted support for the most vulnerable children and young people enables early intervention.
<p>Finding 2.</p> <p>a) Targeted support for children and young people enables the effective integration of services to support the most vulnerable and monitor the circumstances under which they might become more vulnerable.</p> <p>b) This suggests that the support available through universal welfare provision may not be as well-targeted and integrated for those children and young people who, whilst not obviously identifiable as vulnerable, may become so due to subtle changes in their personal circumstances.</p>	

### 4.2.1. Discussion of Finding 2: supported by the research data.

In Local authority G, one of the managers I interviewed commented that in fact the authority appeared to be much more effective at integrating its (welfare)

services where there was targeted or specialist support provided – but was less effective where the universal services were in operation.

### **Does integration mean inclusion?**

**Box 4.7.**

**School Improvement Officer:** *“I’m going to be honest; I think we’ve got a long way to go before our services are fully integrated. I think we’re much more effective at integrating services where there is targeted or specialist provision – but less so where there’s universal services in operation.”*

[GSOI p1].

**Box 4.8.**

**School Improvement Officer:** *“We have an initiative called Early Excellence: for example when a (teenage) mother becomes pregnant, all the support services kick in from that moment. That way, issues that might arise in the mother’s life that would serve to make her more vulnerable – alcohol, drugs, mental health and housing – are monitored and she is given support the moment she needs it.”*

[GSOI pp 7 – 8].

In Boxes 4.7 and 4.8, the School Improvement Officer raises important issues that support Findings 2 and also overlap with aspects of Findings 1. She suggests that the quality of support provided for those children already identified as vulnerable was better integrated (and, by implication, more effective) than the welfare support available 'day to day' through the local authority's Children's Services. This suggests that there may be an imbalance between welfare provision for those children at the extreme end of the vulnerability spectrum and those who are close to the margins and *at risk* of vulnerability, but who have not been referred to any agencies as needing support. This is linked to Findings 1(a), the failure of the National Indicators to probe "cohorts (of children and young people) sufficiently to ensure that vulnerability is identified according to a child's changing circumstances". It suggests that the welfare reforms (specifically the integration of services) of the ECM programme might be militating *against* those children and young people who are not at the extremes of vulnerability, which is also borne out by Findings 1 (see discussions of National Indicators above). If this is the case, the ECM programme for change would appear not to be providing support for children and young people inclusively, across the different categories and stages of vulnerability – and therefore contrary to the aims of ECM.

**Box 4.9.**

*"Its support project for young people successfully focuses on early identification of youngsters engaging in anti-social behaviour, and the reduction in first time and repeat offenders has exceeded national targets this year. The number of final warnings and convictions of looked after children has continued to fall".*

[Example from an Annual Performance Assessment, Local Authority G, 2005].

The comments in Box 4.9 are taken from the Annual Performance Assessment for local authority G two years before I conducted this research study. It illustrates how closely local authority targets are linked to the government's own national targets. It also highlights the high level of concentration of resources on those young people deemed to be most at risk (in order to reach the national target for reducing repeat offenders) and therefore raises the question of parity of the quality of integrated services available across the range of vulnerable and "not so vulnerable" children and young people.

**How targeted support makes a difference.**

Local authority G's performance has been judged consistently as very good and good, in their Annual Performance Assessments over the last three to four years. This is clearly down to the quality of their provision of targeted support, which has produced very successful outcomes. The high quality of this provision is outlined in the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of local authority G, a section from which is included in Box 4.9. During his interview for this research study, the Youth Offending Manager discussed the nature of targeted support within the context of the overall welfare support package that was set up in the

borough of Bortley. In Box 4.10, he describes this support model and the way it works. The reasons for the success of this initiative are undoubtedly due to the effective working together of the multi agency team, which involved clear, open lines of communication that encouraged a productive exchange of information. These aspects connect with Findings 3 (see Section 4.3) : “integrated services and the extent to which agencies work together” and “the extent to which agency teams exchange and use information about children and young people”, demonstrating the links across the categories of the Findings.

**Box 4.10.**

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“The model we developed in Bortley....identifies fifty of the most vulnerable young people, usually adolescents. And people from the police, schools, housing wardens, educational welfare and social work can all nominate young people (for consideration)....We look at early intervention...and provide support....to prevent them from getting into trouble”. “Kids haven’t done anything wrong necessarily, but parents have informed us (of their concerns). If it happens again, the panels.... intervene before the young people become criminals”.*

[Transcript GYOT, pp. 6 &11.Local Authority G].

## **What builds effective targeted support?**

The high quality of targeted support described in Box 4.10 (Local authority G) was not apparent in the data from interviews with Local authority C. In his interview, the YOT Manager for Local authority C talked about the difficulties his team had experienced in trying to bring together the different agencies, to provide more targeted support for the children in their care. In Box 4.11 he describes the difficulties of referring young people on YOT programmes for support, when they had behavioural problems at school. He explained that the difficulties of referring young truants for support, in conjunction with schools and social services, were compounded by the fact that the young people concerned had either been excluded from school or were truanting (a typical profile of each of the young people I interviewed in this authority) and were also in foster placements or the care of the local authority. Where this was the case, the different agencies failed to “join up” and agree on a planned support package. This lack of integration across the different agencies prompted the manager to say:

*“....there have been severe limitations, not grasping the total concept that every child matters whether the child is at school or not”. (. Manager, local authority C, transcript p. 3).*

This is a telling statement that drives directly at the rationale of the ECM reforms. It is perhaps indicative of the extent of the local authority's problems in this area that in 2006, (the year prior to the research interviews) they received a judgement of ‘unsatisfactory’ for their provision for the ECM outcome of staying

safe, with specific reference to the stability of its foster placements for looked after children :

*“The stability of placements for looked after children continues to be unsatisfactory. The proportion of children being moved three or more times in their first year remains unacceptably high and exceeded the government’s key threshold for the second year running” (Ofsted, 2006, Annual Performance Assessment for Local authority C).*

**Box 4.11.**

**Youth Offending Team Manager (C):** *“...communications between departments were abysmal. We’d say to children’s social care that we’re looking at one of your children and they’re not in school. We need to have a joint approach to the school about how we do something about this. Social Care – part of the problems with the stability of their placements was because the children weren’t in school; they were in foster placements or residential care getting into trouble.*

*...the schools – because of the way they count ....this issue of league tables. (The attitude was) ‘we don’t want problems in school therefore we’ll get them out – that drive of we’ll get rid of the problem rather than deal with it became so negative it created problems for the other agencies”.*

[Transcript CYOT Manager, p.5. Local authority C].

In Box 4.8, the school improvement officer from Local authority G makes it clear that targeted support was the outcome of the effective integration of the different agencies, acting to monitor and support a young person “*the moment she needs it.*”

In contrast, the communications across the different agencies in local authority C were “abysmal”, (Box 4.11).

In Box 4.12, we see that in 2008, the year after the research interviews, the inadequate integration of the welfare services was cited specifically between the Children and Adults’ Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the other services. This has a direct bearing on the quality of support given (or not) to young people who had the fragile/vulnerable profiles that were typical of those whom I interviewed. Many of their problems were connected with mental health issues that emanated from circumstances such as parents’ alcoholism, drug use or terminal illness. The APA cites as inadequate local authority C’s provision of early intervention and systems for assessing need, both of which constitute the elements of Finding 2.

From the research data and the APA it would appear that over time, local authority C’s lack of effective integrated services is restricting the capacity of its children’ services to provide effective, targeted support to the most vulnerable children, young people and their families. The category of integrated services is a key element of Finding 3, illustrating another linkage across the categories of each of the findings.



**Box 4.12.**

*“There has been significant improvement in the placement stability of looked after children although placement choice remains limited.*

*“The child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) is inadequate. It is poorly integrated with other services and access to the service is variable. The revised strategy is not yet fully implemented and most children and young people, unless they are in crisis, wait far too long for assessment”.*

[Annual Performance Assessment (APA), local authority C, 2008].

**4.2.2. Discussion Finding 2: supported by the literature.****Needs-driven provision of welfare services.**

In local authority G, the welfare agencies enjoyed the productive legacy of an Early Excellence Centre (EEC) located in one its most deprived areas. The EEC initiative paved the way for Children's Centres and extended schools, and implemented many of the concepts espoused by post 2003 Children's Services, as set out in the Every Child Matter documentation. The Centres were established in the late 1990s to bring together early education, day care, social support and adult learning. These centres created strong links with social service and health service provision and also provided joint delivery of parent training and funding for learning needs. One successful outcome of an EEC located in authority G is shown in Box 4.13, which describes a good example of targeted support, provided for children who were part of the local speech and language services caseload. In this example of a 'needs-driven' service, the EEC provided targeted support through identifying children in need of speech/language therapy and then providing them with continuous support for

as long as they needed it, rather than a short-term, finite course of treatment. This type of service is in contrast to the traditional approach of welfare provision, in which services were “supply led”, reflecting the original ideology of the welfare state that was based on service providers’ “conceptualisation of needs” in terms of “professional group interests and bureaucratic boundaries,” rather than on the modernised approach, which aimed to provide support based on “the needs of individuals, groups and communities,” (Bagley et al. 2004, p.596).

**Box 4.13.**

*“These children receive a needs-driven service where waiting times are kept to a minimum, generally 6-8 weeks for initial assessment and 6-8 weeks for therapy following this if considered necessary. Therapy is able to be continuous for children who need it, rather than offering children a set number of sessions and then being placed back on the waiting list”.*

*“The early identification of these children and the intervention at a young age will have a large impact upon their ability to access the curriculum and learn, both now and in the future”*

[Evaluation Report 2002 – 2003, for Centres of Excellence Authority G].

Finding 2 alludes to the existence of a possible differential between the quality of support given to the most needy children and young people and those who are not demonstrably at the extremes of need. One solution to this imbalance was to be found in the Vulnerability Index, constructed by the primary schools and YOT in Local authority G (Boxes 4.1 and 4.2). Further evidence from the Research Study, shown in Boxes 4.11 and 4.12 demonstrates instances of inadequate professional practice that are (however unwittingly) promoting social

exclusion, through a lack of support for those children and young people who are at risk, or already victims of exclusion from school.

### **The limitations of conceptualising people's needs.**

In the further literature review, I read about the background and context of the government's changes to social policy, which became the drivers for the welfare reforms that were at the heart of the aims of the ECM/YM programmes, along with the Laming Inquiry (Great Britain, Her Majesty's Government 2003 b). The aims of ECM/YM enshrine the government's aspiration to eradicate social exclusion, through improving the life chances of those people who suffer from all/a range of the barriers that prevent them from leading independent, productive lives. The document "Reaching out – think family" (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Task Force, 2007) reflects the need to recognise that there are many factors that might exclude people from the welfare services and opportunities enjoyed by those in "mainstream" society (Bagley et al. 2004, p. 596) and lists the different types of disadvantages experienced by families across a range of areas that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion. These disadvantages are shown in Diagram 4.1: disadvantages experienced by families that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion (constituting multi-deprivation).

**Diagram 4.1: Disadvantages experienced by families, which reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion (constituting multi deprivation).**

1. No parent in the family is in work.
2. Family lives in poor quality or overcrowded housing.
3. Neither parent has any qualifications.
4. Mother has mental health problems.
5. At least one parent has a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity.
6. Family has low income (below 60% of the median).
7. Family cannot afford a number of food and clothing items.

*“Reaching out – think family” (Great Britain. Social Exclusion*

*Taskforce 2007)*

In this government document it is recognised that “these indicators are not a definition of social exclusion, but are selected to illustrate problems across a range of areas of disadvantage. It is important to note that all of these risk factors concern the adult or adults in the family, and are largely controlled by the adult and other adult-based support services. Children’s services can mitigate the effects of these disadvantages but are usually less able to have an impact on the disadvantages themselves” (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Taskforce 2007, p.9). These comments illustrate the complexity of the concept of deprivation because when viewed together in a list such as this, we can see the indicators of disadvantage are drawn from major aspects of people’s lives and

well-being such as: mental health; poor physical health/physical disadvantage; low levels of work place skills/competences; low income and resultant impoverishment in terms of being able to clothe and feed a family. The seven indicators of disadvantage in themselves do not constitute deprivation; indeed, experienced separately, they create *difficulties* for a family rather than circumstances of *deprivation*. However, where one or more of them combine (or where one inevitably leads to another) they will “have a compounding effect” (ibid. p.9) which results in (multi) deprivation, a state in which children and their families become at risk/vulnerable. Viewed from this perspective, we can understand the enormous challenge multi-deprivation presents to children’s services in local authorities, particularly in the light of the fact that all of the indicators in Box 4.1 “concern the adult or adults in the family, and are largely controlled by the adult and other adult-based support services”.

The emphasis on joining up services and creating more strategic policies (through integrating the services) is seen as one way of making services more inclusive – or of *targeting* support more effectively, especially for those who are the most vulnerable and needy (often referred to as the “hard to reach”). A research team from Durham University (Bagley et al 2004) highlighted the importance of a shared vision amongst the staff to the success of a Sure Start team; the focus of their research was an evaluation of inter-disciplinary multi-agency working in a Sure Start centre (ibid. 2004, p. 601). An educational psychologist interviewee from the research project who spoke of the need to “professionally determine clients’ needs” was described by the manager as Chapman

someone who “just isn’t speaking our language.” The interviewee was speaking in terms of providing a service that was “supply led,” reflecting the traditional approach of welfare provision (apparent long before the “third way” and “new right” forms of government that blossomed in the 1980’s and 1990’s). The modernizing agenda of governments since the early 1980’s “distinctively targets the needs of individuals, groups and communities”, in direct opposition to the traditional approach of conceptualizing needs and service provision in terms of “professional group interests and bureaucratic boundaries” (Bagley 2004, p. 596). As public services are increasingly delivered locally, it is claimed they need to be user-centred and focused by providing more effective support that is tailored to the particular needs of groups and individuals.

### 4.3. Findings 3.

*“We’re....a small authority, we do actually know our kids....we’re never that far away. Not like (another local authority)....they’ve got offices here and there and everywhere. When we say the name of a kid, we can all visualise them, we all know them”. (Multi agency professional, Local Authority D).*

**Table 4.3: Elements of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2007) emerging from analysis of data from Research Study (1): Finding 3.**

	Elements of theory.
Element 1	Integrated services and the extent to which agencies work together to support children and young people.
Element 2	The extent to which agency teams exchange and use information about children and young people.
<p>Finding 3.</p> <p>Where multi agency teams meet regularly, with the specific purpose of intervening and supporting the most vulnerable children and young people, it is the <i>localised</i> nature of the teams that is a major factor in the effectiveness of how they use information about the recent history of children and young people. Under such circumstances, this information is readily exchanged and issues that overlap across the different agencies are quickly picked up. Often the managers themselves act on and implement the day to day interventions, obviating the need for communicating through a time-consuming, “arms length” chain of command.</p>	

#### 4.3.1. Discussion of Finding 3: supported by the research data.

From the interviews with welfare professionals and young people in local authority C, the data shows that at the time, the Youth Offending Team appeared to be the most pro-active (of the welfare agencies) in referring young people for the support they needed; there was no established multi agency approach across the different services. Boxes 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16 show the outcomes of the inadequate integration across the welfare agencies in the local authority, through the story of Joe, one of the young offender interviewees. This data gives us another perspective in addition to that of the Youth Offending Team, which is inter- connected with the role of local schools in providing support to young people who are vulnerable/at risk. In Box 4.14, Joe's father outlines the failure of the local schools to intervene effectively to support his son.

##### **Box 4.14.**

**Q:** *"Going back to Joe's troubles (exclusions and discipline) at primary school...how do you feel about the support given to him"?*

**Father:** *"I'd have welcomed more intervention but I can see why people wouldn't want to waste their time with someone who will actually distract everyone else. I think they probably tackled it wrong. It didn't happen at secondary school either. They haven't got the time to do it".*

Joe had a formidable history of truanting. He had received several fixed term exclusions from primary school, after which he moved school.



At secondary school:

*“...he got kicked out of school so many times; he was out of school more than he was in it. He’s been on report since Year 7”. (Transcript, Joe’s father, pp. 3 a& 4).*

Joe was clearly a difficult young person to deal with; when I interviewed him he was on the YOT Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Scheme (ISSS) as the result of committing an offence at home. In Box 4.15 Joe’s father explains that very little practical help had been forthcoming from his schools, to help support him and get him back “on track”.

From Box 4.15 it would appear that one of the schools’ interventions for dealing with Joe’s persistent truanting was to encourage his family to adopt a “payment by results” strategy. This did not help in improving his attendance or behaviour at school. Joe’s background and profile were not typical of the young offenders I interviewed because his needs for support were less readily identifiable.

**Box 4.15.**

**Father:** *“At the end of the day, they (the school) were telling me to give him privileges to make him behave himself. It got to the point where our daughter wasn’t getting (similar to) what he had”.*

**Joe:** *“We both got what we wanted, I wanted a Freeview box and my sister had a lap top. I wanted more”.*

**Father:** *“They were using me to get what they wanted - £300 - £400 lap tops – I can’t afford to keep paying that out”.*

[Transcript YPC, p.5].

The other young offenders I interviewed had histories of drug/substance misuse; they had mostly been removed from their mother/father because they were

deemed to be at risk; they had all been excluded permanently from school and continued their education (albeit fitfully) in pupil referral units. Joe's background was different and contained none of the factors of disadvantage shown in Diagram 4.1. However his truanting and exclusion profile was similar to that of the other young offenders. Despite this, he had made good academic progress and at the time of interview had been entered for his SATS (Standard Attainment Tests) a year early.

### **Assessment of need, targeted support and integrating the services.**

Joe's mother had attempted, unsuccessfully, to have him referred through the educational psychologist to the local authority's Children and Family division for a full assessment, because both she and her husband (and Joe's YOT case worker) felt Joe needed extra help and support. The reason he had been taken onto the YOT's ISSS programme was because he had committed a criminal offence in the home. Therefore, the school's strategy of recommending the course of action outlined in Box 4.15 might well have been successful with a young person whose behavioural patterns were the outcomes of neglect or abuse at home, (and therefore more readily diagnosed). But in Joe's case the strategy only served to create further difficult outcomes and compound the difficulties for him and his family. The fact that Joe's mother had to instigate negotiations to refer him for a psychological assessment illustrates how little the school was working with the family and the other welfare services to support him. This lack of integration across the services may have (through failing to act at a crucial time) contributed to the "last straw" in Joe's behaviour, which was to commit a criminal offence in the home, which in turn resulted in the intervention

of the YOT (who work to prevent young people from being convicted for first time offences). This evidence affirms close link between the extent to which the agencies are integrated and the quality of targeted support available.

Throughout Joe's time with the YOT, his case worker had received very little information about his background from the schools. She describes these

**Box 4.16.**

**Q:** *"Did you have much information on Joe when you took over his case?"*

**Case worker:** *"No. (although) we've got education on the team we (only) get access to a very basic record of what schools he's been to, exclusions and why....Also, we don't get much information on young people generally. When we visit other people's houses there might be a risk, but we will not know it. The other services don't go into other people's houses as much as we do".*

[Transcript YPC p.10].

circumstances in Box 4.16, explaining the difficulties she had in supporting Joe which were due mostly to the absence of useful information from other agencies such as the school. If the school had worked more closely with, for example, the YOT and social services, or CAMHS to support Joe's, it is likely that his patterns of behaviour would have been scrutinised more closely and led to him being considered for a psychological assessment (which his mother was endeavouring to do, independently). This highlights the links across Findings 2 and 3: integration of services, targeted support and assessment of need.

## **Sharing information.**

The Research Study data shows that the way in which welfare agency teams share and use information about children and young people in order to support them, is equally important to their meeting regularly (ie integrating successfully).

In local authority D, the multi agency team I interviewed was dedicated to supporting the looked after children throughout the borough. The group was formed as a direct result of the manager of the residential care homes recognising the huge gap that existed in accessing information from the other agencies about the children in care, which he describes in Box 4.17. The group's initial remit was operational, but developed beyond this and as a consequence was awarded Beacon Status (awarded by the Improvement and Development Agency). This accreditation recognises examples of good practice and in the case of Local authority D this was evident through the way it exchanged information and acted on it to improve the support for looked after children and young people. (Beacon Status confirms that a particular provision has a positive impact on service improvement). The multi agency group was very proud of this achievement and during my interview with them this was apparent in the way they talked about their commitment to providing the highest quality of all-round support for the children in their care. In Box 4.17 there is a clear indication of how open and candid the multi agency group discussions were; they discussed many of the difficulties they had experienced as a team and the efforts they had made to improve continually the overall processes of provision. I asked the team to talk about how and why they had originally come together. It occurred to me that their formation might have been the outcome of some very good, embedded practice and systems rather than the because of

any deliberate or strategic decision- making at senior management level. The answer they gave showed there had been a robust line of communication between them and senior management and that their input as welfare practitioners had been acknowledged and encouraged, resulting in their current good practice.

**Box 4.17.**

**Residential care manager:** *“In the past you did feel that no one knew you existed; rather than have access to more services, they seemed to reduce....it brought it even more home that I needed information from XX and YY (multi agency managers) about these kids.*

*The group kept getting mentioned as an example of good practice....now we’ve got representatives from residential manager, the LAC team, the leading core team – so that’s a really good forum.....it stops people (young people) slipping through the net”.*

**Multi agency professional:** *“It could highlight bad practice in some area but we could suddenly become aware of something that’s not right, we become unhappy with the way something is – it could be (to do with) solicitors or something as simple as that.*

[Transcript DMAT, pp 6 – 7].

This good practice may well have been replicated elsewhere in the authority because they also talked about a similar group that met under the umbrella of Duty of Care, comprising a forum for professionals that was held fortnightly at which they brought children “to the table” who were, for example, missing/absent from education.

**Box 4.18.**

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“(There are) strong links with the police. Two (police officers) are seconded (and there is) access to the police database”.*

**Q:** *“Since when has it operated at this level”?*

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“Information sharing has been there from very early days and the close working relationships have developed over time.*

**Q:** *“Since before 2004 (ie before ECM)”?*

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“Yes. Since we’ve gone from a steering group to a youth crime management board chaired by the Director of Children’s Services (DCoS) it has a much more multi agency feel to it.*

**Q:** *When ECM changes were heralded, many DCoS’s were recruited from education. Many people thought this was an issue – it shouldn’t be”.*

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“If a DoCS comes from schools people say they don’t understand the other agencies. As long as you’ve got the right people in SMT to reflect the various issues....nobody could have that level of multi-agency understanding in their individual background”.*

**Q:** *“Do you think that’s why it works well in your authority”?*

**Youth Offending Team Manager (G):** *“Yes. One of the strengths we have is the (huge) size of the management team that sits in children’s services”.*

[Transcript GYOT, p. 18].

**The structure of teams.**

The way multi agency teams are structured also has a bearing on the effectiveness of way they share and use information. In Local authority G, the YOT manager cited this as a contributory factor to the team’s successful work: *“the way we structure teams is a strength as well; meetings are about sharing*

*information. Information flows back and forth and team leaders come together.”*

In Box 4.18, he talks about why the multi agency team is effective, suggesting two factors; that of agency representation, in particular that of the police, and the access to high quality sources of information in the form of the police national database. Later in the interview he goes on to discuss the structuring of teams in more detail and refers to the significance of the different professional backgrounds of senior managers in children’s services, saying that he believes this should not promote one agency above any other, provided there is a balance across the team to give voice to all the different aspects of provision. In the case of Authority G, the YOT manager also thought the size of the multi agency team (*“it’s huge”*) was a particular strength. From his evidence it can be seen that this particular multi agency team had a clear strategic function, looking at early intervention from a youth offending team’s perspective and providing support to young people to prevent them from becoming a “crime statistic.”

There are similarities here with the multi agency team in local authority D, where they had impressed on the senior management the need to give looked after children a priority, and that this should be reflected in decisions made at the highest level.

### **The size of teams.**

On this matter there would seem to be a disparity between the research data from Local authority D and that from Local authority G. In Box 4.19 the multi agency team considered the small size of the authority to be an advantage, because the multi agency team knew all the children and young people in their care and being close at hand meant they could act quickly when providing

support. On the other hand, the manager from Authority G cited the “huge” size of the children’s services management team as a strength. Perhaps the differences between these two apparently contradictory points of view is that in Authority D, the professionals were attached to a small team dedicated to the care of the looked after children and young people, who comprise only a proportion of the total population. In Authority G, the large team referred to is the one situated at senior management level within the children’s services (the directorate) which comprises the leaders of children’s services. Considering these different functions of the two teams, it would make sense to conclude that small-sized teams are best suited to working at local level, whilst at a senior management level the larger-sized teams with a broad representation of the different agencies would be best placed to make the strategic decisions.

**Box 4.19.**

**Multi agency professional:** *“We’re such a small authority we do actually know our kids. It helps the multi-agency working- we’re never that far away. Not like (another local authority)....they’ve got offices here and there and everywhere. When we say the name of a kid, we can all visualise them, we all know them”.*

[Transcript DMAT, p, 27].

#### **4.3.2. Findings supported by the literature.**

##### **Integrated services and targeted support: how are they linked?**

Finding 3 strikes at two significant factors within the ECM/YM programmes:

- a) the government’s proposal to integrate the different agencies involved with the care of children, young people and their families;



- b) the importance attached to the way the different agencies share information

These two factors are espoused in the aims of ECM/YM and government documentation such as the ECM Green Paper (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Treasury 2003c, Section 5.2): "the fragmentation of responsibilities for children leads to problems such as information not being shared between agencies and concerns not being passed on. As a result, children may....receive services only when problems become severe." These aims are also discussed at length at parliamentary level through the DfES Select Committee (Great Britain. DfES (2005b paragraph 61): "The government intends that as a result of Every Child Matters, closer professional working will become more widespread and integrated front line teams....will become the norm. The aim of integrated teams at the front line is ostensibly to enable a more seamless service....bringing together universal services and more targeted services."

These two quotations have particular resonance with the key elements of both Findings 2 and 3: targeted support and integrated agency teams. In its discussions, the Select Committee sees integrating agency teams and bringing the universal services together as the means of providing more targeted services. The research evidence from Local authority G showed there was something of a divide between the integrated "front line teams" offering targeted support and the extent of integration evident across the universal services (ie where support is not targeted). Research Study 1 was conducted with a very small sample of respondents, so it would not be possible to generalise from these findings. However, the evidence may provide something of a 'reality

check' in showing possible differences between what the government espouses in its policies and what is actually being engaged with in the front line services.

### **What is multi-agency working practice?**

Two different sources of literature present effective analyses of the nature of integrating professional work forces and illustrate some of the complexities and barriers that come into play when multi agency working practice is set up. Box 4.20 contains a short section from a national research team's evaluation of the Early Excellence Centre Pilot Programme for 2001 – 2002, which clearly defines what the team has identified as being the significant factors of effective multi-agency working.

**Box 4.20.**

**A shared philosophy and working practices across the range of services.**

*“To work effectively, an integrated centre needs to work in a way that is open, efficient...and professional...The evidence suggests.....to work effectively, all members of the multi-agency team should:*

- a) share an understanding of each other’s roles within a shared philosophy and agreed working principles;*
- b) successful practice seems to involve a relaxation of professional boundaries;*
- c) development of a non-judgemental but highly professional and principled environment.*
- d) There is a need for a less compartmentalised mentality.”*

Evaluation of the Early Excellence Centre programme, (Bertram et al (2002, P.10

**Box 4.21.**

**Findings from research**

1. Achieving role clarification around defined work-flow processes;
2. addressing barriers related to status;
3. acknowledging the contribution of peripheral team members;
4. working towards ‘specialist’ skills retention;
5. understanding the impact of changes in roles/responsibilities on professional identities;
6. recognizing professional diversity whilst nurturing team cohesion.

[Research project MATCh (Multi-agency Team Work in Service for Children).

University of Leeds, Anning et al. 2005 p. 178].

In Box 4.21, evidence is reproduced from another research project, “Multi-agency Team Work in Service for Children” (Anning et al. 2005). This project was conducted with five well-established, multi-agency teams, which were representative of the types of teams operating in education, health, the voluntary sector and social policy in the United Kingdom. If we compare the evaluation outcomes and research findings in Boxes 4.20 and 4.21 respectively, distinct similarities can be found. For example, point 6 from Box 4.21 encapsulates points a) and c) from Box 4.20. It is not necessary here to analyse these outcomes and findings at length, but rather to use them to highlight the level of complexity intrinsic to each of the issues contained in both boxes. “Agreeing working principles”, “relaxing professional boundaries” and “recognising professional diversity” (Box 4.20), whilst nurturing “team cohesion” (Box 4.21), are all very complex concepts to work with because they are inextricably bound up with both personal and professional identities. Also, my own research data shows that the issue of professional boundaries is fraught with tension and suspicion across the different agencies when one or more attempt to exchange information about vulnerable young people (Research Interview Transcripts DMAT, pp 30 -31; GSOI, p.12, available on request from author). Because of the complex, inter-professional issues that are closely bound within multi agency working, the government’s aim that “closer professional working will become more widespread and integrated front line teams....will become the norm” will not happen simply because it says it should. Amongst the many issues that need to be considered are those to do with the deeply rooted anxieties that agency professionals have to face as they are expected to bring about the shift towards multi-agency working (Anning et al. 2005, p.181). Clearly the multi

agency teams in local authorities D and G had successfully negotiated many of these anxieties and dilemmas. However, at the time of the interviews local authority C clearly had a long way to go with these processes and if we consider again the judgements made in its 2006 Annual Performance Appraisal (Box 4.12) it appears that it still needed to progress further with integrating its services. At the time of conducting this piece of research (2007), it was apparent that there was still inadequate integration across the agencies, resulting in “*most children and young people, unless they are in crisis, wait far too long for assessment*” (Box 4.12). Assessment of need is also an element of Finding 2, and closely allied with targeted support because the support is structured in response to the assessment of need.

## **Summary.**

### **Linkages between the Findings.**

Each of the above three Findings was inducted from the key elements, or issues that arose from the data captured in Research Study 1. The analyses in this chapter reveal many of the linkages that occur across the Findings.

- High quality targeted support (Finding 2) is facilitated by effectively integrated services (Finding 3). Finding 3 links the structure and size of multi agency teams to the effectiveness with which information is exchanged and used.
- In the section, “What is multi-agency working practice?” we see from the data that a lack of integration across the different agency teams (Finding 3) in local authority C resulted in inadequately targeted support (Finding 2) for some of the most vulnerable children and young people.

- In the section “Vulnerability: knowing it or prescribing it?, targeted support (Finding 2) and multiagency working (Finding 3) are closely linked with Finding 1. The Vulnerability Index, created through collaboration between the YOT agency and the primary schools, brought about improved processes of identifying vulnerability (Finding 1), resulting in better targeted support (Finding 2) for the children concerned.

### **Defining “vulnerability” or being “at risk”.**

*“You know the kids and know what makes you concerned “.* In Local authority G, the YOT manager made this statement about the intuitive process of understanding what makes a child vulnerable and when, which implies just how complex and sensitive the process of identifying vulnerability is. The joint working between the YOT and the primary schools produced the Vulnerability Index, which was a solution to the inadequacy of the National Indicators in identifying vulnerability across a wide range of children. The outstanding aspect of this intervention was its effectiveness in identifying vulnerability in children who had previously not been considered to be at risk in the conventional sense (ie according to National Performance Indicators) of the definition.

### **The complexity and dilemmas of multi agency working and difficulties in achieving good working practice.**

*“....there have been severe limitations, not grasping the total concept that every child matters whether the child is at school or not”.* The YOT manager in Authority C made this insightful comment when referring to the lack of integration across the agencies of social services, schools and the YOT. In this example, the barrier to making “joined-up” decisions on behalf of vulnerable

young people was attributed to a failure on the part of welfare professionals to take the initiative and cross the “professional boundaries”, in order to implement the appropriate support and protection of young people.

### **The challenges facing children’s services.**

The key factors that constitute the indicators of disadvantage draw from major aspects of people’s lives, which are mostly controlled by adults. This presents an enormous challenge to children’s services; whilst they may be able to mitigate the *effects* of these disadvantages, they are usually less able to have an impact on the root causes of the disadvantages themselves. The nature of such a challenge can result in frustration and feelings of helplessness on the part of the welfare agencies who encounter these issues on a daily basis in their front line work with children, young people and families. The words of the YOT manager in local authority C reflect some of this frustration:

*“....this issue of league tables. [The attitude was] we don’t want problems in school, therefore we’ll get them out – that drive of we’ll get rid of the problem rather than deal with it became so negative it created problems for the other agencies”. [Transcript CYOT Manager, p.5. Local authority C].*

This highlights how the challenges faced by the welfare agencies can place them in a double bind. The YOT manager was referring to those young people who had been placed in residential care homes or foster care and who were persistently truanting from and getting into trouble at school. Social services had provided support for the young people concerned but this provision appeared to

be in isolation to the provision in some of the local schools, who viewed the young people as a threat to their overall performance figures (or national performance indicators) and “got rid of”, or excluded them rather than exploring their circumstances further and working with social services to provide a solution to the wider range of their difficulties. On one hand, (one of) the *effects* of the young people’s disadvantages had been tackled by social services, through placing them in care. However, the *causes* of their disadvantage, such as parental mental health problems, acute poverty, drugs and alcohol, clearly could not be dealt with through the single act of placing them in care. The challenge to the welfare agencies in this example was compounded further by the failure of the schools concerned to tackle the pupils’ problems from any sort of a holistic approach, or through working with an integrated, or joined-up agency approach to support them. This reflects the high level of complexity facing the welfare agencies in their attempts to support children and young people. Amongst the many issues at play here, we can identify aspects from Finding 3, the issue of sharing information across the different agencies and from Finding 1, the inadequacy of centralised performance indicators in identifying the particular needs of the most vulnerable children and young people. This reinforces the imperative that welfare support needs to take account of the multi-faceted contexts of children, young people and their families. The challenge to local authorities and the welfare agencies is in how and when they share this information in order to provide support that is both timely and effective.

I consider these findings from the first research study as rudimentary to the overall research question. When considered collectively, the findings begin to



open up the enormous complexities that exist in the process of identifying vulnerability and the many external and internal factors that affect the degree to which welfare agencies are able to realise the aims of the ECM/YM programme. Considering these findings at length prompted me to think about the ways in which the research respondents might have perceived the welfare support they received (or lack of it) at times when they were most at risk. How would they view the differing practice across the welfare agencies? At which points in their lives would they have most benefited from effective, targeted support and what went wrong for them when support was not available?

In the next Chapter 5, Developing the Conceptual Framework for Research Study 2, I discuss the development of the rationale and research design for the second part of this thesis, which is centred around the second research study. I examine more closely the concepts and issues that have emerged from the analysis of first research study. I also conduct another literature review that introduces further, relevant issues that contribute to the wider political and social context of the ECM/YM programmes for change and the socio-economic landscape that reflects the changes in social policy (and society) that have taken place over the last twenty years. I discuss some of the influences that have shaped the government's approach to policy making and question the extent to which our current welfare policies actually support the aims of the ECM/YM programme. I also question whether the policies themselves serve the welfare needs of the people in this country, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, or whether in fact they reflect the government's *conceptualisation* of welfare need.

## **PART TWO**

### **Chapter 5.**

#### **5. Developing the Conceptual Framework for Research Study (2).**

##### **Introduction.**

The research data from research study 1 (re-stated here in Table 5.1) show that the ameliorative strategies espoused by the ECM/YM agenda are not necessarily effective in identifying those children and young people who are the most vulnerable and who have the greatest needs (Finding 1).

The findings also raise questions about the quality of welfare provision across the universal services as compared with the provision for those children and young who are in particularly vulnerable circumstances (Finding 2). The overarching category of integrated services, from the first conceptual framework, was extended and slightly re-framed by the first set of findings as shown in Finding 3; an additional factor to the success of integrated services is the localised nature of welfare teams. Where teams can meet regularly to discuss the vulnerable young people in common to each of the agencies, intervention is both timely and effective because there they are not subject to a centralised, bureaucratic hierarchy (and lengthy chain of command).

In response to these findings, I could see that my overall research question was beginning to change. The shortfalls identified in welfare provision and the questions raised by the findings directed me to consider how vulnerable

children, young people and their families perceived the welfare support they received (or did not receive) and if their experiences would reflect similar issues to those raised in the findings. I was also directed to consider as problematic the many other, broader-based objectives set out in the ECM/YM agenda that espouse improvement in the holistic care and support of children, young people and their families, such as: supporting parents and carers; early intervention and effective protection; accountability and integration – locally, regionally and nationally and workforce reform (Great Britain. HM Treasury 2003a).

**Table 5.1, Findings from Research Study (1).**

<p><b>Finding 1.</b></p>	<p>The <i>intelligent</i> use of “hard” and “soft” data (by welfare agencies) helps to pinpoint/identify need and vulnerability amongst children, young people and their families as their personal circumstances change.</p> <p>The application of centralised, prescribed performance indicators alone does not probe cohorts (of children and young people) sufficiently to ensure that vulnerability is identified according to a child’s changing circumstances; neither does it guarantee timely intervention/support when they are most in need of it or the effective evaluation of provision.</p>
<p><b>Finding 2.</b></p>	<p>Targeted support for children and young people enables the effective integration of services to support vulnerable children and young people and monitor the circumstances under which they might become more vulnerable. This suggests that the support available through <i>universal</i> welfare provision may not be as well-targeted and integrated for those children and young people who, whilst not obviously identifiable as vulnerable, may become so due to subtle changes in their personal circumstances?</p>
<p><b>Finding 3.</b></p>	<p>Where multi agency teams meet regularly, with the specific purpose of intervening and supporting the most vulnerable children and young people, it is the <i>localised</i> nature of the teams that is a major factor in the effectiveness of how they use information about the recent history of children and young people. Under such circumstances, this information is readily exchanged and issues that overlap across the different agencies are quickly picked up. Often the managers themselves act on and implement the day to day interventions, obviating the need for communications through a time-consuming, “arms length” chain of command.</p>

If the data from my first study suggest that the government's centralised indicators of vulnerability (as used by local authorities and the welfare agencies) do not successfully probe the circumstances of vulnerability, then it is feasible to question whether the overall aims of ECM/YM are proving ameliorative or an exacerbation to the state of vulnerability (and all the attendant issues such as poor life chances, mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse). I therefore decided that my next research study would focus on exploring more deeply the underlying issues that directly influence the circumstances of a group of vulnerable people and their families who were at the extremity of need. These data would provide me with a reflection of the reality of their experiences; an analysis of the data, I hoped, would probe the wider aspects that are critical to: a) the extent to which welfare provision meets/does not meet the needs of those most in need of support and b) the ways in which factors of vulnerability render people unable to access support as and when they need it.

### **5.1 A closer look at vulnerability.**

The government's document, "Reaching Out: Think Family" (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Task Force (2007) shows data from an analysis carried out by the Families and Children Study conducted in 2005, which focused on the "disadvantages experienced by families across a range of areas, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion" (Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2007, p. 9). The cross-cutting nature of social exclusion is evidenced in the type of deprivation that faces those children and families who are in the most need of the interventions espoused in the ECM/YM programme. The profile of the

children in these vulnerable families commonly shows under-achievement at school and life chances that are significantly less advantageous than those of children at the more privileged end of the socio-economic spectrum. This is because their family backgrounds are usually chaotic and fragmented and manifest a cluster of negative factors such as mental health, drugs and poor housing: “when a (vulnerable) mother becomes pregnant, all the support services kick in *from that moment*. That way, issues that might arise in the young mother’s life that would serve to make her more vulnerable (alcohol, drugs, mental health, housing/homelessness) are monitored and she is given support at the moment she needs it” (Interview Transcripts GSOI, lines 139 - 145, available on request from the author).

#### **5.1.1 Indicators of vulnerability (recap from Chapter 4).**

The analysis conducted by the Social Exclusion Task Force (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Task Force 2007) using the Families and Children Study (FACS) shows that around 2% of families in Britain experience five or more of the “basket” of disadvantages. These are reproduced from Chapter 4, to facilitate ease of referencing and are shown again in Box 5.1: Disadvantages experienced by families that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion) and this constitutes multi-disadvantage, or multi deprivation (Social Exclusion Task Force 2007, p. 8).

**Box 5.1: Disadvantages experienced by families that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion (constituting multi deprivation).**

1. No parent in the family is in work;
2. Family lives in poor quality or overcrowded housing;
3. Neither parent has any qualifications;
4. Mother has mental health problems;
5. At least one parent has a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity;
6. Family has low income (below 60% of the median); or
7. Family cannot afford a number of food and clothing items.

“These indicators are not a definition of social exclusion, but were selected to illustrate problems across a range of areas of disadvantage. *It is important to note that all of these risk factors concern the adult or adults in the family, and are largely controlled by the adult and other adult-based support services.*

Children’s services can mitigate the effects of these disadvantages but are usually less able to have an impact on the disadvantages themselves” (ibid p. 9). The fact that these indicators are mostly concerned with the adults in the family serves to heighten the level of risk and vulnerability under which children in the family are placed. My first research study findings show that where such a combination of disadvantages exists in a young person’s home background, putting them at high levels of risk and vulnerability, they dramatically and adversely affect all the relationships within the family unit and appear inextricably linked to the inevitable negative outcomes in their personal

development and achievement. The profile of one of the young people interviewed for the Research Study (1) is shown in Box 5.2: “Profile of Andy”. The italicised comments indicate the connections between Andy’s circumstances and the disadvantages of social exclusion listed in Box 5.1.

### **Box 5.2. Profile of Andy.**

- Andy is 17 years old and currently under a full care order, decreed by the local authority (LA). He was taken away from the care of his mother (no father present) because she was an alcoholic and not considered suitable as his main carer, *(corresponds to bullets 4 and 5 in Box 5.1)*.
- He has been convicted for a crime and is currently on license (tagged) whilst assigned to a case worker in the Youth Offending Team (YOT). Whilst under the care of the YOT he remains out of prison. If he does not keep to the terms and conditions of the YOT programme he is at risk of being sent back to prison.
- During the time he spent at home with his mother and siblings, he became a regular user of drugs and this has significantly (adversely) affected his mental health *(connected with bullets 1 – 6 in Box 5.1)*.
- He now resides in the care of his grandmother – but the local authority do not consider her to be a “suitable adult” *(bullet 4 from Box 5.1)*.
- The terms and conditions of his full care order mean that he cannot access his social benefits whilst he is the subject of a full care order. As a consequence he steals to get money.



This example from the first research study shows how a young person, in a family whose circumstances reflect many of the disadvantages of multi – deprivation, becomes caught within a *cycle of deprivation*. Because of his disadvantages at home, Andy became vulnerable. This triggered support from the welfare agencies and he was taken into care. Because of his subsequent drug dependency he then turned to crime and was imprisoned. Whilst he was out of prison on license (at the time of the first research study) and in the care of the local Youth Offending Team, he also became at risk of breaking the terms and conditions of his support programme because of his fragile personal circumstances.

Andy's family profile is similar to that of the "fragile families" identified in a US research study, funded by grants from the US department of health and other charitable, private foundations such as the Ford Foundation. This study was called "The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study" (Lamb 2004 p.368) and followed a nationally representative cohort of nearly 5,000 children born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000. The study includes a large over-sample (an over-representation) of children born to unmarried parents specifically for the purposes of studying low-income and minority families. In the study, reference is made to unmarried parents and their children as "fragile families" to indicate "that they are families and that they are at greater risk of breaking up and living in poverty than more traditional families". For the purposes of the study the two terms were defined thus: *fragile* – referring to the high rates of economic and relationship instability "in these unions" and *family* – referring to the biological tie between the parents and child. This is a useful working definition for the family circumstances of Andy (Box 5.2) and, indeed, the other young people I

interviewed who were all supported by the local Youth Offending Team (YOT). In the American research study, it was stated that the increase in fragile families was “of interest to researchers and policy makers who care about stratification and inequality, related to race, ethnicity and *poverty status*” (ibid. p.368). The stratification and inequality referred to in this research study equate to the aims of the ECM/YM programme that are to do with redressing the achievement gap and providing intervention to support those fragile families in the UK who are the most disadvantaged.

### **5.1.2 Identifying vulnerability.**

The evidence contained in Box 5.2 shows the negative outcomes of Andy’s multi deprived circumstance. These outcomes correspond closely to the set of indicators included in the Vulnerability Index that was compiled by local authority G, explained in the first research study (see Appendix, Table A 1.2). The initial Vulnerability Audit was constructed by teachers in primary schools, in response to a request from the Youth Offending Team manager who wanted the schools to work with the multi agency teams in supporting children who were, or could be at risk of offending. The aim was to identify the most vulnerable children and young people across local wards as part of a strategy to structure appropriate support and intervention to prevent them from experiencing the negative outcomes that tend to follow from being at risk – such as exclusion, falling behind with work, truancy and offending. It incorporates main categories and sub-categories of vulnerability, of which the sub-categories correspond to the nature and detail of vulnerability that the child or young person exhibits. For example, the main category of “engagement with family” has amongst its sub-

categories “general communication, parent evening attendance, support with homework”. This Index was designed by teachers to identify more accurately those children whose behaviour or performance in school suggested they might be vulnerable in some way (and therefore in need of intervention and support). The more factors the children presented, the more extreme, or urgent was their need of support. The main categories of vulnerability within the Index correspond closely to the first three of the ECM five outcomes: being safe; being healthy; enjoying and achieving. On the other hand, the factors that constitute multi deprivations - shown in Box 5.1 - constitute the *circumstantial* factors that constitute the state of multi-deprivation. These circumstantial factors could be said to be the cause of the categories/symptoms of vulnerability included in the Vulnerability Index and this is confirmed if we consider how and by whom the Index was constructed. It came into being after collaboration between the Youth Offending Team and the Primary schools in Local authority G. The staff in the schools felt that the existing indicators available as a tool for identifying the levels of children’s vulnerability lacked rigour and were not sufficiently probing. To improve on this, the manager of the Youth Offending Team encouraged them to produce the Vulnerability Index that contained a new set of indicators that recognized many different forms of vulnerability. These went beyond those identified through the “hard” or measurable data/indicators from the centralised performance indicators (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Government, 2008a). The new indicators incorporated into the Index included aspects such as bereavement or separation anxieties and engagement with the family. With this new Index, the schools now had a tool with which they could identify a child’s state of vulnerability (which can fluctuate over time in response to a family’s

changing circumstances) by using it as part of an overall system of assessment. Therefore a whole new framework of indicators was pioneered and this had already (at the time of the first research study) identified a number of families who clearly had need of support, but historically had not “scored” the requisite number of indicators to trigger support. These new indicators successfully probed the hard-to-reach children, young people and their families. This type of “non-forensic” assessment of need enables professionals to respond to the ebb and flow of the symptoms of vulnerability that Broadhurst et al argue for (Broadhurst et al. 2007): “using a ‘forensic’ indicator to judge provision/need/vulnerability means judgement is not contextually grounded. This restricts moves at a discursive level towards a child welfare paradigm of intervention” (ibid p. 445).

Using the Vulnerability Index as a regular part of assessment meant that the teachers in the primary schools were able to pick up on children’s symptoms of vulnerability *as they arose*, which then made it possible to intervene and implement support for them when they most needed it, thus “protecting children and maximising their potential” (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Treasury 2003c, p.9). The disadvantages of multi-deprivation are rooted deep within a family’s circumstances and for this reason it can be difficult for the different agencies to identify the more subtle or nuanced changes in children’s behaviour that could highlight factors that might indicate them as vulnerable. The Vulnerability Index was designed by practitioners “on the ground” to obviate the constraints of the government’s centralised performance indicators, which were proving inadequate to the task of identifying the status of a child’s vulnerability in school *as it changed, according to the child’s personal circumstance* .This Vulnerability

Index could provide a useful blueprint for the government to use in realising its aim to “have in place by 2010 high quality arrangements to provide identification and early intervention for all children and young people who need additional help”, (Great Britain. DCSF, 2009). The indicators of vulnerability included in the Index are more detailed and finer grained than the factors of disadvantages that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion (constituting multi deprivation) shown in Box 5.1. As in the case of Andy, (Box 5.2), these indicators of vulnerability can be seen as the *outcomes* of the disadvantaged circumstances in which children live, which in turn produce the symptoms that teachers in schools should be alerted to as they observe the children and their patterns of behaviour. However, even a well structured Vulnerability Index such as this will not, on its own, guarantee that these symptoms of vulnerability will be registered by staff. The staff/professionals themselves need to be trained or inducted into applying the indicators within their day to day teaching or care practice and they will need to have good contextual information about the children and young people in their charge in order to make the connections between what they observe and what they know about them (children and young people).

Tragically, this is too often not the case, as was witnessed in the cases of Baby P’s murder at the hands of his carers (Anthony, 2009) and the abduction of Shannon Matthews, (Glendinning, 2008) which had been staged by her mother. Were the teachers at Shannon’s school aware of the disadvantages in her home background? How quickly would they have been able to identify changes in her behaviour, her general demeanour and performance in school? These vulnerability indicators provide a rich contextual framework against which the school could have monitored Shannon’s behaviour and well being (and that of

the other children), but it would only prove effective if all staff used it as part of their overall provision of care. The same could be said of the social services in Haringey in their care of Baby P. The factors that threatened, and perpetuated the threat to, Baby P's safety and well-being at home were not acted on by the agencies concerned and so the decision-making processes that might have lead to effective intervention were inadequate. Therefore, in both cases, the agencies failed to intervene effectively at the critical stages in the children's lives.

## **5.2 Socio-economic background.**

Because the causes of the disadvantages of multi-deprivation, are rooted deep within the families' circumstances, it is useful to look at the changes in the economy and the structure and location of the family unit over time. It can be said that in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain there are fewer and fewer tight-knit families to be found in communities compared to traditional extended families. Historically (in the mid 1950's and earlier), in these tight-knit family units any sort of scandal (poverty, unemployment or pregnancy out of wedlock) was frowned upon by the neighbours. But in the latter example, the daughter would have been supported by the extended family, thereby helping to produce a "respectable" outcome from a potentially very disreputable situation. In their acclaimed report, Young and Wilmott (Young and Wilmott 1957, p.33) talk about the "exchange of services" that existed within families in the mid-1950's and before. A full range of help was given at child birth: clothes for the baby and where to have the baby were all discussed with the mother, who was the "close companion of hers (the daughter's) daily life" (ibid, pp. 33 – 34). Families usually got the support they needed from relatives, who were the most important source of help at child birth.

Other aid for the wife was provided by her grandmother, despite the existence of welfare services and so “wives depended on their kin” (ibid, pp. 36 - 37). Part time work for the wives fitted in well with the needs of children through the increasing availability of jobs in shops, post office, factories and cleaning jobs. A powerful tide of opinion later attested that one of the single most influential factors to bring radical changes to the traditional role of the wife and mother (as outlined above) was the introduction of the contraceptive Pill in the early 1960’s and women’s (subsequent) emerging new role within the family unit (Dennis and Erdos 1992, p.3). Women no longer considered themselves as the unequal partners in a marriage, either economically or sexually. As a consequence, the traditional roles of both wives and fathers changed irrevocably as did the ecology of the family. A selection of statements from the literature that support this school of thought is shown below in Table 5.2: The changing role of mothers in the family.

**Table 5.2. The changing role of mothers in the family.**

<b>Dennis and Erdos, 1992.</b>	<p>“Web of kinship” roles in families were created by Christian values; these have changed” (p.4).</p> <p>“Since the availability of the Pill, who has benefited and who has lost by the changes in family life? (p.4).</p> <p>“The big change has been the progressive liberation of young men – partly at the insistence of young women - from the expectation that adulthood involves life-long responsibility for the well-being of wife and 15 – 20 years or responsibility for their children” (p. 4).</p>
<b>Lamb, 1994.</b>	<p>“Mothers are gatekeepers, constraining and defining roles of fathers” (p. 13).</p> <p>“Mothers may refuse marriage because fathers are unreliable, have problems, eg drugs, mental health issues, anti social behaviour“ (: p. 374)</p>
<b>Young and Wilmott, 1957</b>	<p>“They (the extended families) accorded proper significance to the pivotal role of women and their relationships - how they raised children, held families and communities together”. (Young and Wilmott, 1959, p. 33 – 34).</p>
<b>Giddens, 1998</b>	<p>The traditional family unit was “based on the inequality of the sexes....and involved a sexual double standard” in which the women were expected to be virtuous, whilst the men were allowed “greater sexual licence” (Giddens p. 92).</p>



Table 5.2 contains quotes from the literature that indicate some of the different interpretations of the changing role of mothers within the family unit and reflect how different writers perceive the changes in family life that have occurred since the 1950's. Whilst the role of the extended family in the '50's made a major contribution to the care of children, it can also be seen as serving to keep mothers "in their place" (Young and Wilmott, 1959, p. 33 – 34) through the constraints of their "pivotal" role in holding families together. A contrasting view is given by Dennis and Erdos (1992, p. 4) which implies that women gained a new-found independence as a result of the availability of the Djerassi contraception pill in 1960 and that this effectively absolved young men of their responsibilities as fathers. Giddens takes another, different stand on the evolution of family life over the last 50 years. He sees the "traditional" family unit as one that existed solely as a result of the "inequality of the sexes" and a model that afforded women no parity with men and that exacted their unwitting compliance in permitting men sexual license within the marital contract. Giddens discusses further the changes in family life in terms of the political right's view that in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century we have a "family in crisis [situation] because the traditional family is disintegrating" (Giddens 1998 p, 90). An analysis of and remedies for this state of affairs are put forward (he says) by the political right: "marriage is the main emotional training ground for errant males, binding them into duties....they would otherwise abandon....Fatherlessness [according to such a view] is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation" (ibid, p.90). Giddens contrasts this right wing view with that of the social-democratic left, which sees the contemporary picture of family as a "healthy proliferation" that embodies the "diversity and choice" that are now the watchwords of the

age”, meaning that we should now accept that gay and lesbian couples, who live happily without being married, can raise children just as competently as the rest of the population, as can single parents “given adequate resources”. Giddens cautions against the idea of returning to the traditional family, as exhorted by John Major in his “back to basics” speech of 1993, urging us to “get back to the basics....accepting responsibility for yourself and your family, and not shuffling it off on the state” (Major, 2009). Giddens gives several reasons why this is implausible. One is that he sees nostalgia for the traditional family as a way of idealising the past, because “broken families were almost as common in the UK in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as they are now” (Giddens 2000, p. 91) and that “historical research is revealing, more and more, that violence and the sexual abuse of children was far more frequent then than thought hitherto”. He also states that the traditional family was an economic unit that was not grounded in the basis of a love or emotional involvement. It could be argued that in fact this is still the case (at the time of writing, 2010) and one supported by disturbing outcomes, if we consider the state of a “modern family” such as the one Shannon Mathews belonged to. This little girl’s mother had had five children, fathered by three different fathers and was arrested for her part in the abduction and neglect of her daughter Shannon. The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire spoke about this type of family as part of the “invisible underclass” that exists in pockets of extreme socio-economic deprivation, such as Dewsbury, where Shannon was abducted and held in captivity. He described such families as never going out or socialising with people outside the family. They live in isolation from the rest of the community and so they and their children interact with virtually no one outside the immediate family. “If it (an event) doesn’t go on in the house of

someone from the family, it doesn't happen" (Panorama, 2008). It could be argued that the proliferation of unemployment, or worklessness, is a causal factor in the continuation of this type of cycle of deprivation and vulnerability. Karen Matthews as a mother was described in a report by social workers as having an "inability to successfully place the children's needs above her own" (BBC documentary team, 2008). When women – and fathers - who are in this state of vulnerability themselves have babies, it is difficult for them to make well-founded decisions about their own and their children's welfare. The subsequent range of social benefits they accrue because of their vulnerability seem to act as factors that perpetuate their state of worklessness in families where unemployment may go back three or four generations as shown in one of the transcripts from research study 1, which is reproduced in Box 5.3: Interview School Improvement Officer, Local authority G. The Officer's comments were given in reply to a question about the potential conflict between the ECM/YM agenda and the government's policies and interventions to raise standards in schools (Great Britain. Department for Education and Skills, 2005a). This issue of potential conflict between the inclusion and standards agendas is included in the conceptual framework for the first research study, identified as one of the potential links to sub-areas for analysis (see Diagram 3.2). In Box 5.3 the Officer makes it clear that the local authority regards the two agendas as inextricably linked and what she says reveals the wide-ranging implications of long term unemployment on people's life opportunities. Through its commitment to high standards in schools across the socio-economic spectrum, and its support for families across their range of welfare needs, local authority G is aspiring to break the cycle/downward spiral of under-achievement. This is a further

indication of local authority G's effective provision for vulnerable children and young people, which is highlighted in Chapter 4 in each of the three findings.

**Box 5.3. Interview, School Improvement Officer  
Local authority G.**

*Q: "Are you aware of any tension or conflict between the agenda to raise standards and the inclusive drive for inclusion that underpins the ECM programme?"*

***School Improvement Officer:** "We never give up on standards – we have 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generation unemployment in the area and we work with families to help break this cycle. Our focus is on high achievement.....*

*This emphasis on achievement runs throughout the services, not separately in primary or secondary. The focus is on family, home and housing."*

*Interview transcript, School Improvement Officer, LAG, p.11.*

Dramatic changes have occurred over time to the roles of mothers and fathers in society and in the structure of welfare benefits. The role of a father is no longer that of chief bread winner - indeed the role of bread winner can now be seen more in the light of someone who attracts the welfare benefits with which the family supports itself.

### **5.3 Literature and Conceptual Framework.**

#### **The different types of literature.**

The literature review that I carried out after Research Study (1) includes research papers and writings that raised and discussed other, relevant issues that contributed to the wider political and social context of the ECM/YM programmes for change. These issues include the changes in social policy that have taken place over the last twenty years. The literature for this area of thinking comprises the following categories:

- a) books written about New Labour, “Third Way” government (or the renewal, or “re-badging” of social democracy) and the role played by the concept of managerialism in the remaking of the welfare state in the UK, and the Labour party’s attempt to modernise accordingly the state and public services;
- b) independent evaluations of government initiatives and other proposed organisational changes that are the means by which the aims of the ECM/YM programme are delivered: Bagley et al 2004); Bertram et al (2001-2002); Bell et al (2002 – 2003) ; Melliush et al. (2005).
- c) articles written in scholarly journals that argue for or against particular aspects of government social policy that relate to aspects of the Every Child Matters programme and, more importantly, to issues and questions arising from my first research study findings. I used this literature to support and shape my analysis of the first research study findings. This type of writing goes beyond merely that of “opinion”

pieces and has informed much of my subsequent research and analysis, which has comprised articles such as these. The value of such writing to my research is the high quality of informed academic critique on issues that surround ECM/YM, which emanate from across the different welfare agencies.

The articles referred to in categories b) and c) fall into the category of policy and evaluation analysis, “where analysis is targeted towards providing answers about the contexts for social policies and programmes and the effectiveness of their delivery and impact” (Ritchie and Spencer, p.4,1994). In my literature review for Part 1 of this thesis, I identified two categories of literature: *conceptual literature*, which is written by experts that “gives theories, ideas and opinions and is published in the form of books, articles and papers;” *research literature*, which comprises reviews, reports and the findings of research, “often presented in the form of papers and reports” (Walliman, 2005 p.32). This also proved to be the case for this second literature review (see Diagram 5.1, Literature Review Part 2. The writings on social policy, New Labour, Third Way government and managerialism fall into the category of conceptual literature. The articles written in scholarly journals can be clearly categorised as research literature. I continue to draw on the DCSF Select Committee minutes, as I did at the outset of my reading.

Diagram 5.1. Literature Review Part 2.



Diagram 5.1, Literature Review Part 2 shows the range of sources for the second literature review, presented in the same diagrammatic format as those for Part (1).

In this second literature review, the shift in emphasis within my conceptual framework can be charted through the titles of the reports/evaluation and books that I analysed and reviewed. For example, The Journal of Education Policy (Bagley et al.2004) and the (Journal of) Critical Social Policy (Broadhurst et al. 2007) stimulated my growing interest in the government's policy-making processes, which I began to see as underpinning the rationale of the whole ECM programme. The books I read (for example, Giddens 2001, Dennis and Erdos 1992) opened up lines of discussion that encompassed many inter-related issues, which I selected for inclusion in the conceptual framework for this second research study, see Diagram 5.5, Conceptual Framework (2).

Through immersing myself in the literature I was able to adopt a critical approach to analysing the underlying political processes and motivations that led to ECM. In turn this led me to question the aims enshrined in ECM/YM and the related documents. Do they reflect a genuine desire on the government's part to improve the welfare provision and life opportunity for children, young people and their families or have they been construed from policies that reflect a more mechanistic, linear focus on raising levels of performance rather than tackling the complex contextual and causal factors of vulnerability and deprivation? The structure of conceptual framework for this second study, (Diagram 5.5) illustrates the three contexts into which the types of literature fell:

- critical social policy;
- political context;



- social policy/social work research.

Amongst the main issues arising from the second literature review, the following reflect a number of key aspects that can be considered as problematic in their influence on the government's approach to policy making:

- *New managerialism* has its origins in the “anti-welfarist element of the New Right [that emerged during the late 1980's and early 1990's], which viewed welfare spending as....a drain on the ‘real economy’ and as producing a dependency culture” (Clarke et al. 2000 p.2). This is a fundamental aspect of “what makes New Labour ‘new’ ....it's abandonment of an economic role for the state – its assumption that it is faced with a ‘new global economy’ whose nature it cannot change and should not try to change” (Fairclough, 2000, p. 76).
- *Labour's use of “Third Way” language and the gap between reality and rhetoric.* An example of this is evidenced in the conspicuous inconsistency between the language of the Freedom of Information Bill and the language used by Labour in its political discourse, in which it argued the case for introducing the Bill, anxious to be seen to be ushering in a ‘new politics’ in which the public were seen as “legitimate stakeholders in the running of the country” (Fairclough 2000, p. 147). The language used to pave the way for the introduction of the Bill (the discourse) and the language in which the Bill was actually formulated was at odds. The final wording of the Bill was concerned with (the government) being able to withhold information on the grounds that to reveal it would “prejudice the working of government”. The gap, or contradiction, here was between the language used in the political

discourse and the “language used in government action” (Fairclough, 2000 p. 147). Returning to the rationale for my first research proposal (research study 1), the above example illustrates the difference between what the government espoused through its policies and what actually is engaged with in the reality of ECM/YM. This line of argument is taken up more forcibly by Gerry Mooney (ed. Lavalette and Pratt, 2006, p.270): “....despite the rhetoric of ‘reform and modernisation’ the government has continued to privatise large swathes of the public sector leading to deteriorating services and worsening conditions for public sector workers”. Here Mooney is referring to New Labour’s rhetoric of increasing the use of the private sector to deliver public services (the new, so-called “mixed economy”), claimed to bring about a more cost effective and efficient delivery of public service and then contrasting it with the stark reality outlined above.

- *“Like so much of Labour’s modernising agenda – beneath the supposed radical preventative exterior lies a neo-liberal agenda based on a confusing and contradictory social inclusion agenda that has resulted in increased regulations and surveillance of poor families, rather than addressing the root causes of disadvantage”.* (Broadhurst et al. 2007, p. 454). The team carrying out the research for the article, from which this quote is taken, discussed critically the ways in which the Sure Start programme is frequently cited as a “testament to the present government’s commitment to fighting poverty and improving the lives of children in Britain”. They argue that in fact further strategies for working constructively with families are needed if social exclusion is to be tackled

effectively. This will require a “reworking of the aims of the Sure Start programme to clearly define and position its services within a framework that accepts ‘community level child protection’ as its focus” (ibid.p. 455). This identifies those areas in which the welfare reforms introduced by the Labour government go only part-way towards achieving their aims (enshrined in the ECM programme) of abolishing the achievement gap across the socio-economic spectrum and supporting the most deprived families and individuals by helping to improve their life opportunities.

- *The Morgan Report (Clarke et al 2001, p.178) and Audit Commission report on Youth Justice stressed recommendations that emphasised the need to act primarily on “evidence-based research”. Anything else was considered as uneconomic and inefficient. This gave rise to the transformation, or a “re-badging” of issues and a new vocabulary of terms such as individual need, diagnosis, rehabilitation and reformation. These newly coined terms gave rise to yet another raft of newly branded terms such as classification, risk assessment and resource management. Do these examples of a new language, through which Labour gives credence to its policies, constitute a “third way political discourse that is structured to secure the positive public opinion of voters – rather than addressing the root causes of disadvantage? “...there is no clear line between finding policies that work and finding policies that win consent” (Fairclough, 2000, p. 5). This gives utterance to the possibility that the language of New Labour might in fact be a tool with which the government presents its new policies to the voting public in order to secure a continued majority vote, (the time of writing is 2008) rather than*

the introduction of new policies to bring about genuinely improved outcomes. It could be the case that policies are presented in a newly worded format carefully designed to appeal to a new voting public (whilst not alienating the more traditional Labour voters). “New Labour is perhaps the first government genuinely committed to the view that the presentation is part of the process of policy formulation” (Fairclough 2000, p. 5).

**Diagram 5.2. Conceptual Framework (2).**

<b>The critical social policy context</b>	<b>The political context</b>	<b>Social policy/social work research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counting easy measures of practice (or hard evidence) has more to do with “suggesting levels of success than any critical examination of the practice.</li> <li>Structuring the assessment process “a priori” around the forensic activities of evidence gathering is an approach that has been widely reported as acting against the effective and holistic identification of need and support, based on those needs. <b><u>Broadhurst et al. 2007.</u></b></li> <li>Current attempts to increase safety through the formalisation of....procedures and...IT systems, may have had the contrary effect to increasing children’s safety.</li> <li>Inspecting agencies....make judgements about good practice without examining actual local practices. <b><u>Broadhurst et al. 2009.</u></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The welfare reforms commenced by the conservative government in the 1980’s, inaugurated a state of permanent revolution in welfare provision that endures today. This restructuring of the State involved, on one hand, the centralisation of control and direction at the same time –and on the other hand - as the decentralisation of service provision/delivery.</li> <li>The Morgan Report and Audit Commission report on Youth Justice stressed recommendations that emphasised the need to act primarily on “evidence-based research”. Anything else was considered as uneconomic and inefficient. <b><u>Clarke et al. 2000.</u></b></li> <li>The police should work closely with citizens to improve local community standards and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need for a different kind of conversation to develop about fathers.</li> <li>The rhetoric was based on assumptions of the traditional roles of mother – in the private domain of home keeper – and father as the worker in the public domain - ie roles were fixed.</li> <li>We have knowledge about children’s views on family life. But there appears to be little that has focused specifically on children’s views of fathers.</li> <li>Fathers were less likely to be seen as offering closeness, support and the good role models were mothers <b><u>Featherstone 2003.</u></b></li> <li>Living apart from their father increases the risk of children suffering from mental health difficulties by over 40%. <b><u>A Good Childhood, Report for the Children’s Society, 2009</u></b></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 'third way', the role is one of providing the framework and mechanisms of support, to enable and empower individuals and groups to improve things for themselves.</li> <li>• Sure Start as a national programme encapsulates the Labour government's commitment to a strategy of inter-agency working, 'joined-up thinking'...to deal with early years social exclusion, within a 'third way' policy discourse.</li> <li>• Being clear about purpose in itself is not enough, since deep rooted cultural differences between professional groups' vested interests in maintaining departmental boundaries and statutory restrictions may undermine efforts to engage in partnership working.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Bagley et al. 2000.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dominant approach to policy making is based in "mechanistic and reductionist" thinking. Language used by civil servants or public sector managers yields phrases that belong more on</li> </ul>	<p>civil behaviour, by using "education, persuasion and counselling instead of arraignment".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many speak of the breakdown of the family. If this is so it is extremely significant. Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation and the engine driving urgent social problems from crime to adolescent pregnancy to child sexual abuse.</li> <li>• Returning to the traditional family is implausible because: there have been profound processes of change in everyday life, which is well beyond the capacity of any political agency to reverse; traditional marriage was based on inequalities of the sexes and the "legal ownership of wives by husbands"; children were the raison d'être of marriage – not so now.</li> <li>• When rightists speak of the traditional family, they don't</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In considering the past 20 or 30 years (say from the availability of the Djerassi oral contraceptive pill) who has benefited and who has lost by the changes in family life?</li> <li>• Women have....gained much of the ground they have fought over. The results for children are the subject of much discussion.</li> <li>• To find the cause of a rapidly increasing phenomenon (the spectacular increases in crime) it is futile....to seek it in factors which may be, or are, in themselves social problems, such as poverty, unemployment and bad housing.</li> <li>• These factors have not been increasing on anything like the same scale.</li> </ul> <p>The notable aspect of national life that has been dramatically changing at the same time as civil life has been deteriorating is the family.</p> <p><b><u>Dennis and Erdos,1993.</u></b></p>
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<p>the production line than in education, health, justice or social work (client, input, levers, growth etc.p.10) input, output, leverage, stepping up a gear etc).Policy and public service are both now described in terms of “delivery” (“one can deliver a pizza, not education or health”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ....evidence-based approach underlined by this mechanistic thinking, which assumes a linear – or unproblematic- relationship between cause and effect (p.11).</li> <li>• Evidence on which policy is based is mostly quantitative and statistical. “This conceals as much as it reveals”.</li> <li>• Chapman promotes a systemic towards policy making (p.12) in order to let go of the characteristics of control and predictability. Most people are unaware of the degree to which their fear of loss control....maintains their commitment to and belief in control and predictability (p. 13).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Chapman, 2004.</u></b></p>	<p>in fact mean the traditional family at all, but a transitional state of the family in the immediate post war period – the (idealised) family of the 1950's”. In fact - the traditional family by this point had all but disappeared.</p> <p><b><u>Giddens, 2001.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can’t understand New Labour unless you get to grips with the reality-rhetoric dichotomy”.</li> <li>• Discourses are deployed by different parties and groups to win sufficient political support, for particular visions of the world to act.</li> <li>• Third Way political discourse is structured to secure the positive public opinion of voters – rather than addressing the root causes of disadvantage ...there is no clear line between finding policies that work and finding policies that win consent”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The context of young fathers is likely to be: more disadvantaged backgrounds; lower levels of qualifications than those who became fathers over the age of 25 years.</li> <li>• Changes in women’s lives in recent times have brought about a change in perceptions of the role of fathers.</li> <li>• Hindrances to young fathers sharing the care of children: child’s mothers’ new boyfriends; influence of the mothers’ families and role of the maternal grandmother.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Speak Cameron and Gilroy, 1997.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My view is that the only way can bring reality to the prison experience is to maintain the link with the outside and this is best done through VCS (Voluntary and Charity sectors) groups and with the family.</li> <li>• “...the greatest untapped resettlement resource that is available to us is the prisoners’ family ....”</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language of the Welfare Green Paper: aspects of it are indicative of its promotional character - its grammatical mood and its modality (eg “there’s no future in that for Britain” as against “I don’t think there is a future in that for Britain”).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Fairclough, 2000.</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Northern Rock Foundation: Keeping Families Together Conference. 2007.</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Love and care.</b> “Children often react to an overwhelming, emotional pain by making negative decisions.... changing [their] whole perspective of life, thereby liberating the child from suffering”.</li> <li>• As we grow older, these decisions accumulate to undermine our self-esteem....Maybe we are criticised in school and concluded that we were not intelligent. As we experience our difficulties in life, we generally adapt by making one negative decision after another”.</li> <li>• <b>Respect.</b> “In meeting other people with respect, we help them to ...acknowledge and use their own resources: intelligence, tacit knowledge, joy of life....and direction”. It is only when we respect ourselves that we can access the hidden resources of our life.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ventegodt, Merrick and Andersen, 2003.</u></b></p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “....Maslow argues that a human being cannot achieve ‘self-actualisation’ at the top of the (Maslow’s) hierarchy without having first met his/her needs at the lower levels”.</li> <li>• “There are certain...prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions...freedom to speak.....to do what one wishes...to express one’s self...freedom to investigate and seek for information...to defend one’s self, justice fairness, honesty, orderliness in the group”.</li> <li>• “Mankind’s behaviour is dominated by the desire to achieve, to satisfy the basic needs on this hierarchy and to maintain this....</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Bennett and Changreaux, First Peoples child and Family Review, Volume 2, Issue 1.</u></b></p>
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## **5.4 A different discourse for analysis.**

The lists of the references used by the authors of the journal/research papers from the research literature also guided my choices of reading for the second literature review. Amongst the most significant for me were those books written about the concept of “new managerialism” and the part played by the Labour party in its use of “third way” political language to shape and articulate its proposed welfare reforms. The concepts being explored in these different writings gave me a new context in which to consider and discuss the findings from the first research study and, indeed, the constructs underpinning the government’s documentation that introduced the ECM/YM programme. Through reading about these concepts, I was discovering a different “voice” for both writing and thinking about my research and, as a consequence, a particular conceptual framework within which to analyse and discuss the issues arising from my findings. In Chapter 1 of this thesis I talk briefly about writing for different audiences, how the readers of this research will be from many different areas of work and have different responsibilities for and interests in children and young people. Each will read this research project from their own particular perspective. These different perspectives may prevent the reader from accessing to the full, the findings of the project, or provoke them to question the validity of the data. Just as I construct a way of writing, so different readers construct their own way of reading the findings; they perhaps (unwittingly) “position” a writer, which influences the way they interpret the writing. The introduction of a new “voice” and a framework for analysing the language of New Labour in the government policies that are “oriented to deliver” (Fairclough 2000, p. 75) the concepts encapsulated in the ECM programme, will help me to

engage my audience within a wider dialogue. At the start, I wrote that I hoped to be able to “avert alternative interpretations grounded in perspectives that are only on the periphery, or loosely wedded to the issues of my field of research”. I am now able to progress from merely stating this, to engaging in an analysis and critique of the *language of third way politics* with which the Labour party introduced its sweeping welfare reforms (and many other legislative changes) after 1997.

### **Old-style social democracy – the language.**

The social democracy of the old left, prevalent from post war years until the mid 1980's, is characterised by: “pervasive state involvement in social and economic life; the state dominating over civil society and a comprehensive welfare state, protecting citizens from ‘cradle to grave” (Giddens 2001, p,7). This old style social democracy also had a tight hold on the economy in terms of “demand management”. This meant that Keynesian theory (the economic inspiration of the post-war welfare consensus) that was prevalent up to the mid-1970s, “paid little attention to the supply side of the economy....market capitalism could be stabilized through demand management. Some economic sectors should be taken out of the market because industries central to the national interest shouldn't be in private hands” (ibid.1999, pp 9 – 10). This reflects the degree of “statism,” or state control, with which the economy was managed under a classical social democracy (the old left). Aspects of the language used above to analyse social democracy resonate with several of the concepts I identified from my first literature review, notably from a DfES select committee (Great Britain.

House of Commons (2006c). The follow quotes are taken from the Select Committee meeting minutes (Chapter 2, Example 2.1):

*“The education system focuses on the “supply side” rather than the “demand side.”*

*“How do we – after health – use this to inform the rest of the work we do with very young children, particularly engaging with parents - get parents to want more from the system”?*

(Great Britain. DfES 2005b).

This comment and question reflect the use of the terms supply, demand and system in such a way as to “dichotemise” the disparity between the provision of health and education services. In the old-style social democracy context, use of these terms would have referred to the management of the nation’s economy, supply and demand referring to manufacturing output, customer “demand” and “system” to the process of manufacturing. In the selected quotes above, these terms are used to describe the gap that exists across the provision of welfare services. The implications of this for the analysis of my own research and findings can be examined within the framework of the *language* used by the government. In the Select Committee minutes we see New Labour language used to contextualise education in terms of the economy, effectively reducing it to the mechanics of the conveyor belt. What are the influences that have brought about this “linguistic conversion” of the discourse of social policies, which has a mechanistic or Taylolean resonance to it that would be more at

home on the factory production line than within the complex, highly charged domain of welfare provision?

## **5.5 Background to the language of New Labour.**

This new discourse for the terms and context of social policies, used by governments from the early/mid 1980's and including New Labour, has its roots in the New Right political forces and ideologies that gained ground in the last 20 years of the twentieth century. These political forces pioneered "anti-welfarism and anti-statism" (Clarke et al 2000, p. 2), which set in process the shift away from the traditional form of welfare state that had been constructed immediately after the second world war. This new, or neo-liberal, approach to the overall concept of the welfare state stemmed from a growing belief in a number of governments throughout the world that "a measure of privatisation and curbing of welfare state provision was necessary", due to "unsustainable demographic and expenditure trends" (Clarke et al. 2000. p. 2). These subsequent reforms to the welfare services gave rise to a new era of social policy-making that was in direct contrast to the social democracy of the post war years, which had "followed a linear model of modernisation....wherein the welfare state was seen to be the high point of a lengthy process of the evolution of citizenship rights" (Giddens 1999, p. 10). The apparent zenith of the post war welfare state was seen, from the late 1970's onwards, as being economically unproductive and one that had produced a dependency culture that was "socially damaging". Thus, a new, or neo-liberal, outlook began to prevail that drew on several sources that included a hostility towards pervasive, centralised forms of

government and a scepticism towards Keynesian theory, which, whilst favouring a mixed economy, also favoured an interventionist approach by the government. (Keynesian theory favoured control of the demand side of the economy in order to “stabilise.... market capitalism” (Giddens, 1999). This neo-liberal approach to government was embraced by Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative party towards the end of the 1970’s, in which the themes of individual responsibility and maximising competition were enshrined, constituting the “New Managerialism” (NM) that revolutionised the public sector. NM is described thus: “one significant dimension of the reconstruction of the welfare state has been the process of managerialisation: the shift towards managerialist forms of organisational coordination. Public sector management was one of the significant growth areas of employment and education during the 1980’s and 1990’s” (Clarke et al. 2000, p.6). Implicit within the revolutionary process of managerialism were some key areas of change that included:

- attention to *outputs and performance* rather than inputs;
- organisations being linked by *contracts or contractual type processes*;
- the separation of *purchaser and provider, or client and contractor* roles within formerly integrated processes or organisations;
- breaking down large scale organisations and using competition to enable “*exit*” or “*choice*” by service users;
- schools referring to Head teachers, deputy and assistant heads as “senior managers” and heads of departments as “middle managers”.

Examples of each of these areas of change affected practice and structure in both the public and the commercial sectors during the 1980's. Patients of the health services were suddenly referred to as "clients". One example typical of the changes embraced by corporate organisations at this time was that of a large UK insurance company that introduced a radical re-structure to its portfolio management services. This involved contracting out services that hitherto had been carried out by internal departments and, what is more, the internal departments had to tender for the services contracts and be competitive against external service providers. This "contracting out" system of service provision became common in local authorities, affecting schools and the health service;

#### **5.5.1 A critical view of public/social policy.**

This transformation to the political landscape created by the Conservative government in the 1970's – 1980's created a "baton" of political discourse that the Labour party picked up (with apparent relish) before and after it came to power in 1997. Fairclough (2001) goes as far as to suggest that New Labour is "post Thatcherite" (ibid. 2001, p. 72). It is this new political discourse that provides me with a framework for analysing the government's documentation for ECM and to go deeper into questioning the rationale for the ECM programme and indeed the overall reforms to the related welfare services that the government has proposed and legislated for.

This New Way of government embraced the underlying principles of: "minimal government; autonomous civil society; market fundamentalism (or de-regulation, where the market has a free play) (Giddens, 1999, p. 8). Thus neo-liberalism, or free market philosophy came into being. The overarching philosophy of new

liberalism is to allow market forces to dominate; this can be seen as problematic when considered alongside the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda. Such a philosophy will inevitably create large economic inequalities, but “these don’t matter as long as people with determination and ability can rise to positions that fit their capacities” (Giddens 1999, p.13). The ECM/YM programme was introduced with the aim of addressing the achievement gap and improving the life opportunity differential that exists for people across the socio-economic spectrum. Are these aims actually supported by the government’s existing free market economy? Included amongst the more recent government documentation that is closely allied to the ECM/YM programme is Think Family (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Task Force, 2007). In the introduction, it states that: “the Every Child Matters agenda has provided a blueprint for radical reform of children’s services.....but a minority of families, around 2%, have simply not been able to take advantage of these opportunities. Poverty and worklessness, lack of qualifications, poor health, insufficient housing and poor parenting can cast a shadow that spans whole lifetimes and indeed passes through generations. These problems can be multiple, entrenched and mutually reinforcing” (ibid. Introduction). It goes on: “against a backdrop of rising prosperity and improved outcomes for the majority of families, there is a small minority of around 2% of families who experience multiple problems. ....Families with multiple problems can also exert a heavy cost upon public services as well as the wider community”. In this document, the government is now acknowledging that there is a core of people whose lives, and those of their families, endure an inescapable cycle of deprivation that dooms them to poor life outcomes. This could be seen as an admission that the government’s neo-



liberalist principles that underpin its Third Way politics *are not holding true* for those with the highest degree of need. For people with these high levels of multi deprivation it is simply not possible for them to improve their life chances by rising “to positions that fit their capacities” (Giddens 1999, p.13), no matter how much determination and ability they may have; the odds have been stacked against them for too long and far too highly. This introduces a question; did the ECM/YM agenda make claims that actually over-reached the government’s capacity, which is restricted by the very rationale of its Third Way governance (namely its commitment to free market forces)? It is apparent that the changes introduced through ECM/YM have not helped 2% of families, those with the highest levels of multi deprivation, to improve their children’s life chances. Also, the findings from my first research study give evidence of three distinct areas wherein the aims of the ECM/YM agenda are not being consistently realised. However, rather than thinking negatively about the ECM/YM programme, or making a generalisation that it is failing to deliver its objectives, I have chosen to examine it through a constructive (and critical) analysis of the discourse of the government’s whole approach to welfare reform and its rationale for policy-making. From this analysis, I hope to be able to pinpoint where or how aspects of social policy do not match the complex welfare needs of twenty first century society. This suggests a re-phrasing to my original research proposal, which could now read:

*“Is the government’s championing of effective integrated services, early intervention and improved life chances for the most vulnerable children, young people and their families simply a part of the process of modernising the welfare*

*services away from the “statism” of post war years towards the processes and systems of new managerialism”?*

My second literature review has opened up these lines of discussion, which have their basis in the language of government and Labour’s neo-liberal approach towards its modernisation of the welfare services since 1997. Some of the discussions and arguments arising out of this literature review draw on the tenets of *discourse analysis*, which are useful tools (amongst others) with which to consider this further analysis of the ECM/YM literature and the government’s welfare agency reforms. The elements of discourse analysis most appropriate to my purpose are those to do with the ways in which *claims* about truth are established. These direct “attention to the rules and practices speakers and writers use to give legitimacy to their claims and therefore to the analysis of the origins, nature and structure of discursive themes by which discussion or text is produced” (Miller and Brewer 2003, p. 76).

Therefore, through analysing critically the government’s version of truth and authority in its policy documents I am not treating the texts as accounts that are representative of the external world, but rather as ‘creations’, that will be explained by the rules, themes and practices through which the government sets out its discourses and creates its policies.

Reading the literature raised several further questions: is the language of New Labour the product of a “magpie” process, whereby it (the government) has drawn on many different sources to create and prepare the discourse through which it now communicates with the public? Is “third way language” and its use within the overall discourse, constructed by the government, a clever means by

which the government *implies* it is going all out to meet the needs and support the rights of the populace, when in fact nothing much has changed from the classical, state centred social democracy of the post war years?

### **5.5.2 The influences that have shaped the language of New Labour.**

“There is little public recognition of the extent to which the policies, themes and language of New Labour are also those of the European Union. Significant elements of the political discourse of New Labour flow across national boundaries in Europe....” An example of this is the “treating [of] the concepts of ‘human capital’ and of educational expenditure as a form of ‘investment’ [which] are now a central theme of European Union policy” (Fairclough 2000, pp 74 - 75). The European Commission’s White Paper on education and training (European Commission, 1995) proposes to treat investment in material issues and in training *on an equal basis*. The background/context for this statement derives from the Paper’s acknowledgement that: “expenditure on education and training is severely affected by the economic cycle and fluctuations in [the] levels of activity” and calls for a “greater attention to maintaining public investment in education and training” (ibid. p.54). In support of these opinions, the White Paper sets out priorities (in the form of Five General Objectives,) with the intention of formalising the public sector’s commitment to investment in education and training. This is considered necessary, because “labour is not considered as an asset. It is an operating cost and is included as such in the company balance sheet” (ibid. p.54). The Paper urges an approach to “explore

how to consider know-how and skills acquired by employees during the course of their duties as adding value to the company, so that part of the expenditure on training and salaries during the training period can be considered as depreciable, intangible fixed assets and transferred accordingly on the balance sheet” (ibid. p. 54). Whilst the intention of this aim is noble (to treat education and training as a valuable asset, rather than the first areas of investment to be shed when the economy takes a down turn) the language used is consistent with the language of New Managerialism (NM), discussed by Clarke et al (2000). In Section 5.5, “Background to the language of New Labour”, I discuss the ways in which NM impels the public sector to consider the major reforms to welfare provision in the language of the corporate sector, with emphases on issues such as economy, profit, outputs and the separation of purchaser and provider. On the same theme, the phrase ‘lifelong learning’, which has been introduced into government policy and documentation over the last ten years, has its origins in the Lisbon Strategy, discussed at the Lisbon European Council 2000:

*“Europe's education and training systems need to adapt.... to the demands of the knowledge society ....They will have to offer learning and training opportunities tailored to target groups at different stages of their lives: young people, unemployed adults and those in employment who are at risk of seeing their skills overtaken by rapid change” (European Parliament, 2000, Section1, paragraph 25).*

Again, the aims of this strategy are noble and address the important learning needs of the future, as seen by the European Council in 2000. However, the

phrase 'lifelong learning' has also been absorbed into the 'managerialist lexicon', through the use of which 'learning' has come to imply an economic rather than an educational process" (Fairclough, 2000, p.75).

Does the application of the terms 'supply' and 'demand' (discussed earlier in Section 5.4) to the description of welfare provision constitute a reductionist approach to evaluating welfare agency provision, or a reflection of the extent to which New Labour has positioned itself strategically, as 'the government of the European Union'? (I discuss the similarities in language across EU and UK government documentation in Section 5.6.1, Complexity). "The language of New Labour is conditioned by the requirement to give national shape to European Union policies" (Fairclough 2000, p. 75). The above discussions would support this point of view. Fairclough discusses this statement with regard to the term 'social exclusion' and how this has now largely replaced that of 'poverty' in the discourse of New Labour (ibid. p.75). Indeed, the issue of social exclusion emerged as significant through the findings of the first research study (see Chapter 3); a local authority had taken part in a pilot for an initiative called Early Excellence, which was part of the government's Social Exclusion programme, set up in the late 1990's. A national evaluation of this particular local programme judged one of the successful outcomes of the initiative as the evidence that "children receive a 'needs driven service'". This was a positive judgement about provision that was tailored to the needs of children and their families, "and was delivered within their pre-school setting where they felt most comfortable. This would not have been possible in mainstream services" (Bell et al. 2003, p.56). The type of support being highlighted here refers to a provision that is the very opposite of "social exclusion", rather a service that is wholly inclusive and one

which allows those children and families with the greatest needs to feel less excluded than they otherwise would, if they had tried to access this support through mainstream welfare services. Therefore in the context of this initiative, the government's use of the term "social exclusion" seems in direct contradiction to the very purpose and rationale of the reforms it proposes. Fairclough highlights the main issue for concern as not the terms themselves as used by New Labour, such as 'social exclusion', 'needs driven' and others, but rather the "language of *policies* oriented to social exclusion".

### **5.5.3 What is the rationale for social policy-making?**

A European Commission report for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (European Foundation 1995) views social exclusion as a "social situation characterised by rapid, complex and profound change. While the majority of Europe's citizens have benefited with increased opportunities and improved living conditions.... A significant and growing minority have suffered poverty, unemployment and other forms of social and economic disadvantage....The longer the disadvantages persist, the wider becomes the gulf between those vulnerable to change and those who benefit from it" (ibid p. 75). This polarisation of circumstances is discussed in terms of the key central policy questions for the European Union (EU):

- i. "What can be done to narrow this growing divide and the development of a dual society with its negative social and economic consequences"?

- ii. “How can those adversely affected by change best be assisted to cope with its effects and to turn it from threat to opportunity”?

(European Commission 1995, p.4).

In his book, Fairclough refers to another European Union publication in which a clear lead is given to policy makers, promoting an “integrated approach to social, economic and environmental policy”, (which can be compared with Tony Blair’s advocacy of “joined-up government”) and urging the formation of partnerships with local initiatives and community organisations, to improve on the delivery of services. From this, and the above discussions, we can begin to identify elements of the rationale for the government’s policy-making processes that do not arise in response to the specific, existing and complex welfare needs of the most vulnerable children, young people and their families in Great Britain. Fairclough says that “New Labour has taken on this view of social exclusion (see above) and also [the] *policies* to tackle social exclusion” (ibid p. 76). This refers to the language of the policy that is “oriented” to social exclusion, has its origins in the EU perspective of social exclusion and is framed in EU terminology and language. On closer scrutiny of the overall programme for reform enshrined in the ECM/YM documentation and the related policies, much of the texts are couched in language that is rooted in the standardised view of social exclusion that applies to the European Community as a whole, rather than with direct reference to the needs of the most vulnerable sections of our own society, in Great Britain. If policy is framed in the language of *another policy* (outside the particular welfare needs of Great Britain), its application to the ECM/YM programme does not actually reflect the specific welfare needs identified in our own society. It could be deduced from this that, as a consequence, the policies

and initiatives are not 'fit for purpose' in terms of reducing the outcomes of and ameliorating the effects of deprivation and need for the most vulnerable groups and individuals in Great Britain. This could further imply that the government has effectively "lifted" a social policy from somewhere else and imposed it onto – or made it underpin - the welfare reforms proposed in ECM/YM, rather than tailoring the details of the policy to match the specific needs of children, young people and their families. Seen in this light, the government's social policy-making process appears to be predominantly "supply driven" because the emphasis is on structuring the supply of welfare support in line with existing EU reforms. This approach could be seen as idealistically similar to Keynes' economic theory, which is based on the belief that market capitalism can be stabilized through managing and *controlling* the demands of the market (Giddens 1999, pp 9 – 10) rather than being led by demand. By using a policy that has been advocated in and for another market, New Labour is to an extent "controlling" or manipulating the rationale for the ECM/YM agenda. We could question why this would be seen as inappropriate, because the government's choice could be born out the desire to ally Great Britain social policies with the well-founded aims of European policies (the "noble aims" of EU policies are discussed earlier in this section). However, if we look at the data available, the welfare needs and issues of Great Britain seem to contrast sharply with those of the majority of EU countries. If this is the case, there would be a point to arguing that the government's social policies are not effectively meeting the specific welfare needs of our own society and that, as a consequence, they are not successful in reducing the outcomes of and ameliorating the effects of



deprivation and need for the most vulnerable groups and individuals in Great Britain.

#### **5.5.4 Comparing the data.**

In Table 5.3, Measures of Child Welfare, (Layard and Dunn 2009, p.5) the pattern in the data captured for children in Great Britain, other western EU countries and the USA indicates a marked difference between the trends shown for Great Britain and the EU. These measures show negative outcomes for GB when compared with those for the EU:

- the percentages for half (three out of six) of the measures included in the Table show a (negative) disparity between GB and the EU of between 7 – 16%;
- the percentages for the other half of the measures show a disparity of 4 – 6%.

Additionally:

- in half of the measures, the percentages shown for Great Britain are *very* close (within 1- 2%) to those of the USA;
- in one of the measures, the percentages for Great Britain are close (within 7%) to those of the USA;
- in all of the measures Great Britain scores higher (that is, shows more negative outcomes) than the European countries;

**Table 5.3. Measures of Child Welfare**

(Based on World Health Organisation (WHO) data relating to 2005 – 2006. Data for USA from Luxembourg Income Study, 2004).

	<b>Britain</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Other Western European countries</b>
<b>Percentage of children (aged 11 -15) in step-families</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Percentage of families eating with parents less than 'several times a week' (aged 15)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Involved in a physical fight in last year (aged 11 -15)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Who have been drunk at least twice (aged 13 – 15)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Not in education (aged 11 -15)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Percentage with income less than 60% of the median (aged 0 – 17yrs)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>

**Table 5.4. Percentage of children living in relative poverty, 2005. (Layard and Dunn 2009, p.131).**

Source: Eurostat.

<b>Sweden</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>UK</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>28</b>

Whilst no statistical significance can be claimed for these observations from the statistics, the comparison suggests that on the basis of WHO measures of child welfare from 2005 (which was, incidentally, the year of the introduction of the ECM/YM programmes) the outcomes of the social policies operating at the time do not appear to have had a particularly positive impact on the welfare circumstances of children in Great Britain. If anything, we appear (in Great Britain) to be lagging behind the EU in terms of the percentage of positive outcomes of welfare provision within the EU. Similar disparities can be seen between another set of welfare indicators, those of the incidence of poverty in Great Britain and the EU countries, shown in Table 5.4, Percentage of children living in relative poverty, 2005. This Table shows that the indicators for the UK reflect a higher percentage of children living in relative poverty than for those living in the other European countries included in the comparison. Compared with two of the EU countries, Great Britain's scores show there are over 10%

more children living in relative poverty; when compared with the other two EU countries there are 8% more. The trend in the data for the USA is similar to that for Great Britain and more so, because 6% more children live in relative poverty in the USA than do in Great Britain. From these two sets of data it could be deduced that Great Britain's social policies are mis-matched to the welfare needs of our society when compared with the data for the EU. The questions could be asked, rather than basing their social policies on EU legislation, the government in GB should perhaps consider implementing policies based on a USA model of welfare support? Another argument could be made from this; that the government's approach to policy making lacks specificity and is perhaps in danger of being Euro-centric, rather than UK 'society-centric'. These are issues for research that is beyond the realms of this particular research study, but that could provide the basis of a future research proposal.

#### **5.5.5 Comparing the language.**

It is interesting to examine the extent to which the language structure is similar in European documentation (European Foundation, 1995), in recent labour government documentation on ECM (TSO, 2003) and in the paper entitled *Reaching Out, Think Families* (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2007). Examples of text from these documents are contained in Table 5.5, A Comparison of language across government and EU documents. Without needing to conduct any kind of in-depth discourse analysis, what can be readily observed from each of the quotations are the striking similarities apparent in the language and phrases used in each of these documents, (which were written at different times across the last twelve years). The similarities are striking because

each of the documents was written for a different audience and a different purpose.

1. EU Foundation. *Audience*: service users, service staff, administrators and policy makers throughout the EU. *Purpose*: To consider the implications of existing social security and social services initiatives (aimed at improving quality and responsiveness for the users/consumers) for the above audience.
2. ECM Green Paper. *Audience*: professionals and administrators across the different welfare agencies. *Purpose*: to urge the local authorities to implement the key strands of ECM/YM in integrating the welfare agencies.
3. Reaching Out: Think Family. *Audience*: the systems and services that have contact with those families that support the minority (2%) of the most vulnerable families in society (Great Britain). *Purpose*: urging the systems and services to adopt a holistic 'family' approach to supporting the most vulnerable individual s and groups.

**Table 5.5. A Comparison of language used across government and EU documentation.**

<p><b><u>EU Foundation (European Commission, 1995.</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>ECM Green Paper, 2003 (Great Britain. HM Treasury, 2003, Introduction)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Reaching out: Think Family.(Great Britain, Social Exclusion Task Force 2007, pp 6 &amp; 7)</u></b></p>
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><i>European Foundation report on “Public Welfare Services and Social Exclusion: The Development of Consumer-oriented initiatives in the European Union (between 1991 and 1994)”.</i></p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><i>“This Green Paper builds on existing plans to strengthen preventative services by focusing on four key themes”.</i></p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><i>“This review asks: what more can be done to improve the outcomes of the small proportion of families who have not been ‘lifted by the rising tide?’ (Of life improvement)”.</i></p>
<p><b>Example 1</b></p>		
<p>“Over the past 20 years, Europe has been facing an economic and social situation characterised by rapid, complex and profound</p>	<p>“Over the past few years, we have seen that progress is possible. Education: our best ever results in all key stages.</p>	<p>“Over the past decade, the overwhelming majority of families have experienced rising incomes, greater</p>

change. While the majority....have benefited from increased opportunities and improved living and working conditions, a significant and growing minority have suffered poverty, unemployment and other forms of social disadvantage”.	500,000 fewer children living....with relative low income than in 1997. Since 1997, the reconviction rate for young offenders has decreased by 22%. Teenage pregnancy rates down by 10%”.	opportunity and improved wellbeing. However, the approaches that have worked for the majority have not worked for the few. It is necessary to focus on helping the small proportion of families with multiple problems who are struggling to break the cycle of disadvantage”.
<b>Example 2</b>		
“What can be done to narrow this growing divide and the development of a dual society with its negative social and economic consequences”?	Overall, this country is still one where life chances are unequal. This damages not only those children born into disadvantage, but our society as a whole.	“....there is a small minority of around 2% of families who experience multiple problems. Growing up in a family with multiple problems puts children at a higher risk of adverse outcomes”.

Example 3		
<p>“How can we best support and assist those who have been adversely affected by change, both to cope with its effects upon them and to turn it from threat to opportunity”?</p>	<p>“Our aim is to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people”.</p>	<p>“If we are to reach out to families at risk, we need to identify and exploit opportunities to build the capacity of systems and services to ‘think family’. This means a shift in mindset to focus on the strengths and difficulties of the whole family rather than those of the parent or child in isolation”.</p>
Example 4		
<p>“Common and consistent messages for policy makers...” which urged “an “integrated approach to</p>	<p>“Key services for children should be integrated within a single organisational focus at</p>	<p>“Integrated working can help draw out the best in families. Multi-agency working around the</p>



<p>social, economic and environmental policy". This should encourage "the forming of partnerships with local initiatives and community organisations to improve on the 'delivery' of services".</p>	<p>both levels. To achieve this the Government will: integrate key services for children and young people.... These bring together local authority, education and children's social services, some children's health services, Connexions, and can include other services such as Youth Offending Teams. [a requirement that] local authorities [...] work closely with public, private and voluntary organisations to improve outcomes for children. Local authorities will be given flexibility over how this partnership working is undertaken.</p>	<p>family can help mitigate risks and boost the resilience opportunities that other family members can offer. We know that wanting the best for their children can be a big incentive for parents to address their own problems".</p>
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- Each of the texts used in Example 1 of Table 5.5 contains opening statements that declaim the successes that the EU and (Labour) governments have had over the past 10 – 15 years in improving the circumstances of some of the most vulnerable individuals and groups in society. Each opening phrase is almost identical: “Over the past twenty years Europe has been facing....change....the majority have benefited....” (European Foundation); “Over the past few years, we have seen that progress is possible. Education: our best ever....results” (ECM Green Paper); “Over the past decade, the overwhelming majority of families have experienced rising incomes....” (Reaching out: Think family).
- The texts shown in Example 2 describe, using slightly different words, the polarisation of wealth and achievement across the socio-economic spectrum. In the EU document this is referred to as “this growing divide”; in the ECM Green Paper as “....this country is still one where life chances are unequal” and in the Think Family document as existing for “....a small minority of around 2% of families who experience multiple problems”.
- The texts in Example 3 all refer to the need for integration: an integrated “approach to social and economic policy making” (EU document); the integration of “key services” for children (ECM) and “integrated working” to “draw out the best in families” (Think Family).

The above analysis identifies clear similarities in the structure and content of each of the documents, which suggests the use of a ‘formula’ for the presentation of the documents. This raises two important questions for the purposes of this research study, concerning the origins and integrity of each of the documents.

1. Were the documents written independently of each another or were the words, language and formats of ECM Green Paper and Think Family document modelled on the EU Foundation document, which pre-dates both by some 10 years or so?
2. Were the content and rationale of the ECM and Think Family documents genuinely focused on the specific welfare needs of the most vulnerable individuals and groups in Great Britain; or was a more centralised hand at work, which required them to echo the EU views and general philosophy and the EU's definition of social services as “....mainstream services experiencing programmes of reform.....with ‘considerable importance for the quality of life of disadvantaged and socially excluded individuals and families’ (European Commission 1995, p.3)?

#### **5.5.6 Rhetoric and Reality.**

The framework I am using to examine the impact of neo-liberalism and New Labour's language of third way politics on the government's rationale for policy making, is illustrated effectively in an article that formed part of my second literature review: “...like so much of Labour's modernising agenda, beneath the supposed radical preventative exterior lies a neo-liberal agenda based on a confusing and contradictory social inclusion agenda that has resulted in increased regulation and surveillance of poor families, rather than addressing the root causes of disadvantage” (Broadhurst et al 2007, p.454). This article was critical of a government-commissioned evaluation report of Sure Start (referenced in the article) and, in particular, one of the points raised in the evaluation, which referred to an “increase in Section 47 enquiries”. The process

of Section 47b enquiries stems from Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act, in which it is stated that it is a local authority's duty to investigate, "...where a local authority [is] informed that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is the subject of an emergency protection order or....[has] reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make....such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare" (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government 1989). This evaluation report, the subject of Broadhurst et al.'s article, implied that an increase in Section 47 enquiries and registrations on the Child Protection Register in Sure Start Local Programme Areas was considered to be a good achievement, reflecting better and/or earlier identification of need and enhanced collaboration between agencies that, in turn, would lead to better identification of and support for fragile families. Broadhurst et al. argue that far from reflecting a better identification of need, an increase in enquiries under Section 47 is evidence that "judgement is not contextually grounded; this type of evaluative tool is similar to ticking a box, looking at cause and effect variables, which is to restrict moves at a discursive level towards a child welfare paradigm of intervention" (ibid., p.444). This is at the very heart of one of the findings from my first research study, which questions the effectiveness of using prescribed performance indicators to assess vulnerability (Chapter 4, Findings 1). It also resonates with the sharper focus of the framework of analysis for this second research study, in which I am aiming to identify and probe those instances where the complex welfare needs of the most vulnerable in our society are not being fully met by the government's social policies.

“....you can’t understand New Labour unless you get to grips with the reality-rhetoric dichotomy” (Fairclough 2000, p142). Fairclough describes this reality-rhetoric dichotomy as the relationship between “the action and the political discourse of New Labour - between what New Labour does, and what it says it does” (ibid., p. 145). Fairclough goes on to say that this gap is not always a matter of “laudable ambition that could not be fulfilled, it is sometimes a matter of less creditable backtracking to protect vested interests”. As an example of this he uses the government’s Freedom of Information Bill, (outlined in Section 5.3, above), which was heralded by Tony Blair thus: “Our commitment to a freedom of information act is clear and I reaffirm it....We want to end the obsessive.....secrecy which surrounds government activity and make government information available to the public....”. A laudable intention. However, when the draft Bill was published in May 1999, it provoked a storm of protest because it was seen as a “betrayal by a government eager to preserve....the obsessive secrecy” it had previously denounced. Changes had been made, between the White Paper and the Bill, to the government’s apparent intent, such as the dropping of the constraint placed on authorities that disallowed the withholding of information unless to do so would cause “substantial harm”. Suddenly, this reason for withholding information was extended to include circumstances where the information “prejudices the workings of government”. This newly defined, very general ‘constraint’ had in effect been widened yet further and now included information that related to the formulation of government policy, not only sensitive policy advice but also “factual information such as scientific advice on genetically modified food” (ibid, pp.146 - 147). So the reality of the Freedom of Information Act was the

emergence of a very much weaker and far less radical version of the original rhetoric that claimed the Act would erase the “obsessive secrecy surrounding government information”. In this example, the rhetoric-reality gap can be seen as a political ‘strategy’, designed to maintain the majority vote for the labour party (through showing its commitment to a policy that would benefit the public), whilst using the ‘small print’ of the final bill to ensure there was actually very little increase in the accessibility of information to the public. On the journey from White Paper to full-blown Bill, the cutting edge of the policy had been considerably blunted, and the implied outcomes for the public drastically reduced. However, any explanation of this was not made available to the public; the Bill was presented as a “done deal”. Using this as a framework for analysis, it is possible to re-contextualise the point made above (in question 2, raised just before the end of Section 5.5.5) about where the government’s social policies fall short of meeting the specific welfare needs of our society. The content of the social policy that is oriented towards addressing social exclusion (made explicit in documents such as the ECM Green Paper, used in Table 5.5) appears on the surface to cover the ‘appropriate’ aspects such as vulnerability, underachievement and a polarisation of life chance across the socio-economic spectrum. However, the language of the policy originates from a *standardised* view of social exclusion that is applicable generally to the European Union community, not specifically to the UK. Therefore the rhetoric appears wholly plausible but the reality is in fact that it emanates from another type of society altogether, which bears little similarity to the situations of those hard to reach, vulnerable children, young people and families in the UK, for whom the ECM programme was supposedly structured.

This argument is developed further through an analysis of the government's approach to policy making (Chapman 2002), see next section

## **5.6 The government's approach to policy-making.**

### **5.6.1 Complexity.**

*"The current model of public policy making is no longer right for a government that has set itself the challenge of delivery. Improvements are driven by central policy initiatives which assume a direct relationship between action and outcome – but this is a false assumption.*

*Public services are complex, adaptive systems which are subject to the law of unintended consequences, so intervention can make problems worse".*

(Chapman 2002, Preface).

In his analysis, Chapman argues that the government's prevailing approach to policy-making is "based on mechanistic and reductionist thinking" (Chapman 2000, p.10). This relates to my discussion in Section 5.4 above, in which I write about the government's use of mechanical and economical terms and phrases that have contributed to the 'linguistic conversion' of the discourse of social policies, which has a direct bearing on its approach to policy making and the emergent central policy initiatives, such as ECM/YM. I imply that this is inappropriate, because viewing the vast, human-based areas of life that are at the heart of welfare service provision from the point of view of services that can be "delivered" is to trivialise the many nuances and unquantifiable issues that abound in such complex and sensitive areas. Chapman states that this reductionist approach to policy making underpins many of Labour's approaches

to “improving policy making”. This so-called “evidence-based” approach makes a number of assumptions “that are clearly not universal” (Chapman 2002, p.11). Chapman goes on to analyse this evidence-based approach as one that presumes a “linear or at least unproblematic, relationship between cause and effect”. He argues the danger of this lies in treating evidence collected from one context as being applicable in another. Support for this argument can also be found in Table 5.5., A Comparison of language used across government and EU documentation and its analysis in Section 5.5.5. In Section 5.5.2, “The influences that have shaped the language of New Labour”, I analyse the similarities of terms and language used in three different government documents. The intention here is to support my own argument about the dangers of the UK government constructing policies based on, for example, Euro-centric socio-economic issues, which will not necessarily represent the needs of our own society. What Chapman is saying is that the government’s reductionist, or rational, approach to policy making makes “unreasonable assumptions about the clarity of objectives...and does not question the implicit linearity assumed between a policy decision, a corresponding interventions and a set of consequences” (Chapman 2002, p.27).

The *consequences* of policy decisions in the complex areas of welfare proved significant to the construction of this second conceptual framework. The findings from my first research study led me to question whether the ECM/YM programmes and their initiatives are proving ameliorative or an exacerbation to the poor outcomes in the life chances of those children, young people and families who experience multi-deprivation. In trying to get to the heart of where things actually ‘go wrong’ for the most vulnerable, I am treating the



government's approach to policy making as problematic – questioning the processes by which policies are structured and implemented. The issue of the consequences arising from such policy making processes are argued forcefully by Chapman and relate directly to the many difficulties that characterise the current landscape of children's services at the time of writing, 2009 - 2010.

### **5.6.2 Unintended consequences.**

In the ECM Green Paper, the aims of the programme for change are described thus: "...As part of the move towards integrated structures....it will be important for local authorities to lead a process of cultural change which includes information sharing and developing a common understanding of terms across [welfare] services" (Great Britain. HM Treasury 2003c, p. 61). When read for the first time, this statement is in danger of sounding unambiguous; but this unambiguity is only superficial and belies the huge complexity of what is actually meant by "cultural change" and the move towards "integrated structures". Some of the barriers to inter-agency working ("integrated structures") are explored in detail in a research paper that is discussed in Chapter 4, (Anning et al. 2005) and these incorporate aspects such as the need for a "less compartmentalised mentality" and to "share an understanding of each other's roles within a shared philosophy". These are the very issues under consideration when Chapman talks about "the biggest drawback/constraint to the 'rational' or 'linear approach' [to policy making] is that this attempts to break down a problem into constituent parts and tackle them in a rational, linear manner. This presumes the areas under consideration (for which the intervention is planned) can be understood in

a fairly straightforward mechanical and linear fashion” (Chapman 2000, p. 26). Inter-agency working (the complexity of which is widely acknowledged through research work, such as that conducted by Anning et al.) is urged by the government as a means of improving welfare provision so that it meets more effectively the highly complex aspects of people’s lives such as vulnerability, exclusion and socio-economic deprivation. However, attempting to “break down” these complicated aspects into easily managed “constituent parts” often results in unintended consequences that are far “messier” than the unproblematic, rational outcomes so much desired by the government through its evidence based approach to writing policies (ibid., p.11; Clarke et al 2001, p.178). An example of such an unintended consequence is discussed at length in another research article that looked at the “faulty design elements at the front-door of local authority children’s services....” (Broadhurst et al. 2009, p.1) and which argues that the attempts to increase safety (in this case through the formalisation of procedures and the application of IT systems) have in fact had the contrary effect. The recommendations made by the Laming Report (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Government 2003) gave rise to many new social policies and welfare initiatives (most significantly ECM/YM), which placed the imperative on local authorities to intensify their efforts to improve their assessment practices and procedures for children who were referred to them. There was a particular focus on improving the ways in which initial referrals/contacts received were processed and the degree of risk assessed. A major part of these improvements was the universal implementation of the IT system, Integrated Children’s System (ICS), which “constrains workers to follow steps specified in a formally defined ‘model’ of the assessment process” .... thus creating “an

indelible, audited trace of day to day practices” (Broadhurst et al. 2009, p. 3). Each stage of the assessment process, from initial contact through to the final outcome, could be traced back to the social worker concerned. The findings from the research included several examples of unintended consequences, as discussed above, one of which was directly attributable to the implementation of these IT “enhancements”, which were designed (and then imposed on social services) to improve the ways in which referrals were dealt with. (These findings derive from a broader two-year ESRC-funded ethnographic study of child welfare practices in five local authority areas in England and Wales). At the time of the research project, the numbers of referrals made to social services were, mostly, far more than could be managed. A major factor contributing to this increase in referrals was the new (in 2008) requirement for the police to provide notification of *all* domestic violence incidents, irrespective of their severity. The impact of the IT systems on the social workers’ daily routine was to “maintain the pace of work, typically by providing digital reminders of deadlines and timescales. In one site, we found an e-tracking device in the form of traffic lights, which informed workers about how much time was left before the specific episode was deemed out of timescale”. This served to create high levels of pressure and stress for the social workers and the researchers observed that “anxieties were mounting as the close of business drew nearer and the day’s tasks were not yet complete” (Broadhurst et al. 2009, p.9). The upgraded IT systems dictated the pace and processes of the social workers’ workload to the extent that it was consistently observed that teams had well established “general deflection strategies” that they had developed to deal with the, at times, unremitting pressure of the deadlines and reminders that flashed up on their

computer screens. One such strategy involved social workers reducing the time pressure to make a final decision by sending back a referral to the referrer, ostensibly to ask for more information; another was “signposting, whereby they deflected the case to a more ‘appropriate’ agency” (ibid., p. 9). Whilst these strategies were in themselves appropriate ways of dealing with referrals, the researchers warn that “....whilst such adaptations are sensible if proportionate, the inherent risks are also clear. Where insufficient time precluded the pursuit of more detailed information from a referrer, other decision-making heuristics came into play”. Another deflection strategy, observed on one site, involved an automatic response (to first and second notifications) by a standardised letter to parents. “We found that well intentioned, but very busy workers became habituated to these methods of rationing, with little time to reflect on, or question, such rationales and the risks they entailed”. These are examples of the type of unintended consequence discussed above which, as these research findings reveal, are in fact *coping strategies* devised by welfare professionals who found the IT system imposed timescales that “created undue pressure” (ibid., p.11). Chapman (2009, p.11) discusses these consequences as the inadequate outcomes of an evidence based approach, which inevitably gives rise to “unintended consequences, which occur in all areas of public policy,[and] are systematically ignored because the evaluation only measures the intended outcomes”). This raises a question about the integrity of a system in which social policy drives the processes of and changes to welfare provision and at the same time dictates the means by which it is evaluated. This is also referred to in Chapter 4, in which I discuss Finding 1, from the first research study, in the context of the literature, which in this case was an evaluation of an Early

Excellence Centre, that “was critical of the limitations of the monitoring and evaluation (of the EEC’s) by Ofsted, asserting that they merely ensure compliance with minimal standards, rather than contributing to the further development and progression of the Centres” (Chapter 4, section 4.1.2.). This critical view of evidence based approaches provides further support to the argument: “....transformative issues such as individual need, diagnosis, rehabilitation.... have tended to be....replaced, or subsumed within a range of ‘actuarial’ techniques of classification, risk assessment and resource management (Clarke et al. p. 178). This calls into question the whole system that dictates the ways in which welfare provision is judged/evaluated by the authorities. Does the government’s mechanistic, evidence based approach mean that policies are written in such a way that their outcomes will conform to centralised, prescribed means of evaluation, rather than for the greater good of society?

### **5.6.3 A conceptualisation of need.**

In section 5.4 in this Chapter I introduced the argument that “by using a policy based on one that has been advocated in and for another market (the EU)”, New Labour was, to an extent, “controlling” or manipulating the rationale for the ECM agenda; that it was *contriving the circumstances of need*. In other words the government could be said to be “conceptualising the needs” (Warmington et al. 2004, page 22) of children, young people and their families through its centralised approach to welfare/social policy-making; that through its approach to policy making, the government is presuming that evidence collected in one

context (the community of the European Union) will match that from another (the UK and its many deprived, isolated rural locations). This is to presume that the specific context of a society is not significant when it comes to the provision of (for the purposes of this research) welfare services; and that there is a common set of factors (economic, socio-demographic, cultural, geographical and so on) that can be presumed for people and families throughout the country (and the different EU countries) and in all circumstances. To presume this is to fail to understand the specific problems of deprivation that affect children, young people and their families in different parts of the country. It brings into question the issue of whether the policies that gave rise to the ECM agenda were fit for purpose or, because the policies appear to be “framed in the language of *another policy* - outside the particular welfare needs of the UK” (see Section 5.5.3), their structure and content (in relation to the ECM programme) do not accurately reflect the specific welfare needs of our own society.

The data from the first research study shows that at the time the research was conducted, the implementation of, and engagement with the ECM programme, by professionals in the welfare agencies, was patchy and showed inconsistencies and shortfalls in key areas identified in the findings. Using Chapman’s argument, that the government’s approach to policy making is “based on mechanistic and reductionist thinking” (Chapman 2002, p.19), this can be allied to the government’s use of language that serves to reduce the complex nature of welfare need and support to the level of mere mechanistic input and output. This is to trivialise the whole concept of welfare provision or to reduce it to a “can do” terminology designed to curry favour with voters and

impress them with an agenda of clear, linear, cause and effect actions to improve outcomes.

## **5.7 Afterword**

One of the ECM/YM programme's aims is to bridge the achievement gap that exists for the most deprived children and young people and improve their life chances. In this Chapter, I argue that it is very difficult for such a wide-reaching aim to be realised through the construction of linear, mechanistic policies that recommend interventions as "causes" that will produce "effects" that will improve on the unequal and unhappy outcomes of extreme vulnerability and multi-deprivation. This evidence based approach to policy-making (and evaluating the outcomes) belies the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the welfare needs of individuals and groups.

Diagram 5.3: The Cycle of Deprivation is a representation of the corollary of the main issues I have discussed in this Chapter. I began with a close look at vulnerability, the indicators of vulnerabil

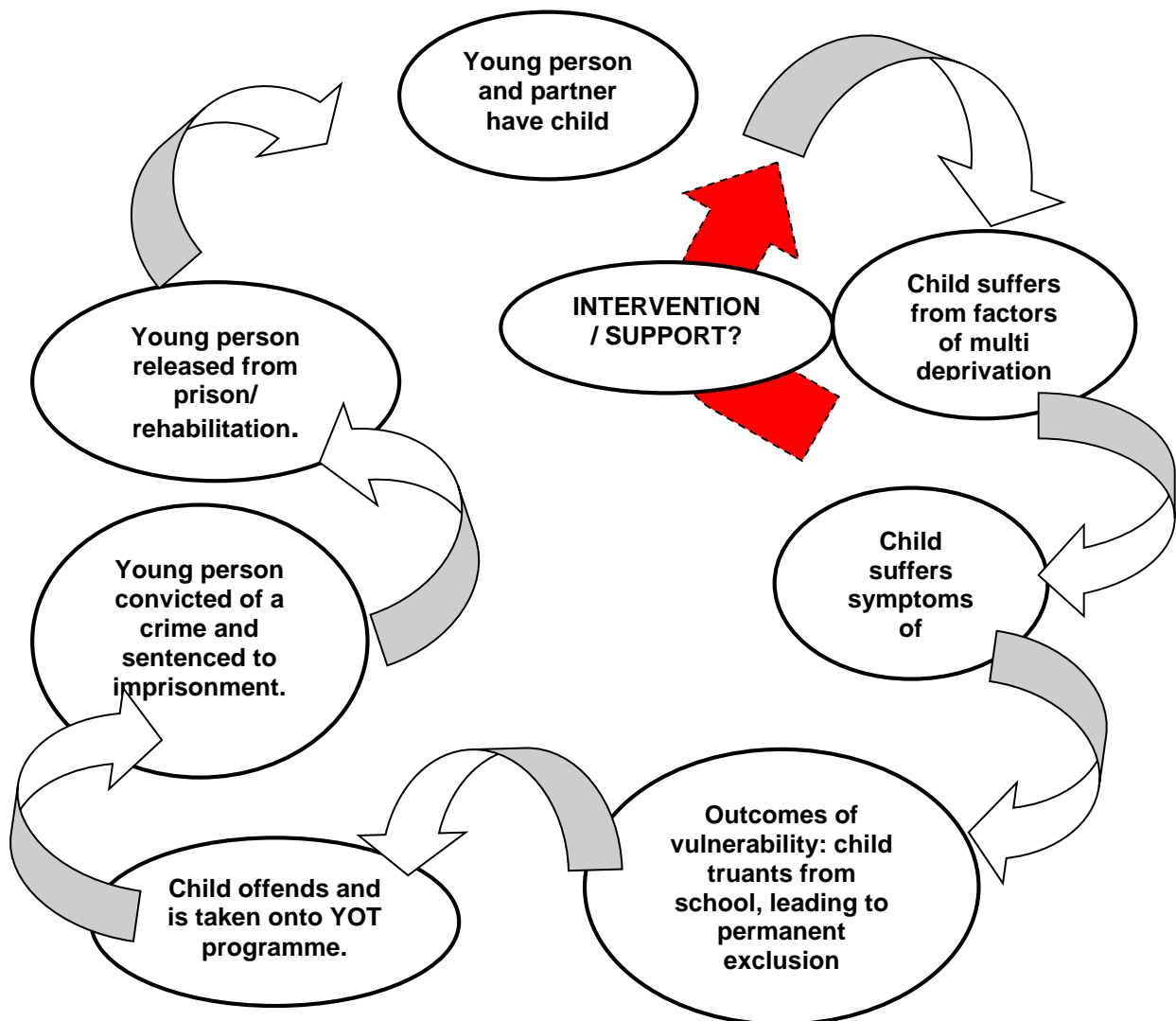
ity, and the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion and went on to a broader consideration of some of the changes that have taken place in the national, socio-economic trends over the last 50 or so years. I also consider some of the factors that have influenced, and continue to influence social policy, within the context of the ECM/YM programmes. With these issues in mind and in the light of the achievement gap that persists across the socio-economic spectrum and with reference to the findings from my first research study, it is clear that those children and young people who are born into the most deprived circumstances struggle to break out of the "trap" of vulnerability that both constrains and

determines their chances in life. There is an inevitability to these negative outcomes, which can be seen as occurring cyclically; for children born into a fragile family there is a very strong chance that their lives will reflect the circumstances and outcomes of their parents'. In Diagram 5.3 I have indicated a possible juncture at which an intervention might help to prevent the perpetuation of the cycle of the deprivation and lessen the likelihood of reduced life opportunity and social exclusion that serve to entrench further the outcomes that reflect generations of unemployment within families.



**Diagram 5.3. The Cycle of Deprivation**

**Parental multi deprivation**



In Diagram 5.3, the suggested moment for intervention occurs at a very early stage in a child's life in order to help prevent the fragile home circumstances from "taking hold" and setting a blueprint for failure. However, the algorithmic

stages of the diagram show that unless the intervention is drastic, such as taking the child into care, the child remains with their parents. The difficulty here is that unless support/intervention actually brings about changes to the quality of parental care and circumstances, it is unlikely the child will have the opportunity to escape the cycle of deprivation. This highlights the importance of structuring social policies that match closely people's local, contextualised welfare needs and that acknowledge the need to tackle the root causes of their disadvantages.

## **Conclusions.**

The entrenched nature of the cycle of deprivation derives from the persistence of the circumstances of need and vulnerability in the lives of children, young people and their families. "When parents experience difficulties in their own lives, the impact can be severe and enduring for both themselves and for their children. The consequences can cast a shadow that spans whole lifetimes and may carry significant costs for public services and the wider community" (Great Britain. Social Exclusion Task Force (2007, p. 4). If my second research study was to make any realistic contribution to examining the aims, shortcomings and successes of ECM/YM programmes, I needed to move closer to understanding the *extent* of the effects of deprivation and vulnerability on young people and their lives and probe more deeply into the reasons why welfare provision does and does not support their needs effectively. I wanted to capture evidence that would reflect the reality of their lives and perhaps indicate a direction in which social policy could progress towards "addressing the root causes of disadvantage" (Broadhurst et al. 2007, p.11).

## **Chapter 6.**

### **6. (Research Study 2). Context and rationale: an emerging new theoretical framework.**

#### **6.1. Overview of Research Part 1.**

In the introduction to Chapter 5, I was questioning whether the aims of ECM are proving ameliorative to or exacerbating the state of vulnerability (in children, young people and their families) and the attendant difficulties that tend to accompany vulnerability, such as poor life chances, mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, housing, child abuse and domestic violence. My reading and analysis of a second literature review helped to develop and move my thinking on towards a more critical appraisal of the influences that define the government's approach to social policy making. This was a critical stage in the development of my own thinking about the second research study.

I began to question: had the focus of my overall research project shifted and should I reflect this in re-naming the project? Where and how should the findings from the first research study direct the next stage of my research? Would there be more of the same methodology in the second research study, or would the theoretical framework be different and therefore lead me to a different form of analysis?

This shift in my thinking prompted me to think about the changes I might need to make to the rationale for my second research study. A new focus had developed from/been informed by the findings from the first study, which was concerned with the *practical implications* of the policies that underpin the ECM/YM

programme, (that is, the impact of ECM/YM on professional practice). This new focus had shifted to one “where analysis is targeted towards providing answers about the contexts for social policies and programmes and the effectiveness of their delivery and impact” (Ritchie and Spencer 1994, p.4,). Instead of looking at the *practical* implications of the policies that gave rise to the ECM programme, the second study was to do with the *context and underlying influences* that shaped the government’s approach to (social) policy making.

The three main findings from the first study are all rooted in the practical aspects of professional practice: the use of centralised performance indicators in assessing vulnerability and judging the performance of the welfare agencies; the nature of targeted support and how this differs from that of the universal welfare services; the way agency teams are structured and the factors that influence the effectiveness of their exchange and use of information on children and young people. The second literature review, discussed in Chapter 5, encouraged me to be more analytical and to adopt a more critical approach towards the underpinning factors that gave rise to the ECM/YM programme for change and to consider a different theoretical framework for the second part of the research and the reasons why the framework should change. I went on to scrutinise the underlying social policy that had influenced the government’s espousal of the ECM/YM aims and objectives. Following on from the findings of first research study I was prompted to consider as problematic (or open to doubt) whether the government’s policies had produced a programme that was fit for purpose. For the first research study I chose to adopt a qualitative approach that would enable me to identify “unanticipated phenomena and influences and generate new theories”, from which, through using analytic tools from Grounded Theory, I

was able to induct three significant findings (rather than theories). This framework for the first research study helped me to get to grips with understanding the context of ECM/YM that the research respondents were experiencing and the many influences in their lives that shaped their responses. My overall research project is grounded in several disciplines that come under the umbrella of social sciences and include: education; social welfare and social policy. So there will perforce be a political nature to the context of the research data, which will comprise complex aspects such as “funding, cognitive authority and power” (Punch 2005, p. 135). From my analysis, interpretation and induction of findings from the first research study, I could see I needed to develop a new rationale for the second research study and this needed to be explained within a new theoretical framework.

## 6.2. Research part 2: Theoretical frameworks.

**Diagram 6.1: profile of a Social Worker.**

***Geraldine.***

“When your sparkle evades your soul;

I’ll be at your side to console.

When you’re standing on the window ledge –

I’ll talk you back, back from the edge.

I will turn your tide,

Be your shepherd - I swear - be your guide.

When you’re lost in your deep and darkest place around,

May my words walk with you home, safe and sound.

When you say that I’m no good and you feel like walking

I need to make sure you know it’s just the prescription talking.

When your feet decide to walk you on the wayward side,

Climbing up upon the stairs and down the downward side -

I will turn your tide,

Do all that I can to heal you from inside.

I will be the angel on your shoulder,

My name is Geraldine – I’m your social worker”.

*(James Allan, Glasvegas, 2008, Sony BMG Music Entertainment (UK)*

*Ltd. Taken from the album, “Glasvegas)”.*

Diagram 6.1: profile of a Social Worker, contains the words to a song that seems to strike at the heart of the difficult, complex and, at times, dangerous job of a social worker. The words describe the role as one that touches on the darkest and most intimate aspects of a 'client's (patient's) personal, emotional and psychological make-up; they portray how crucial the interventions of the social worker are to the client's well being and, in extreme circumstances, their personal safety. The words reflect just how closely the lives of the "client" and the social worker are entwined. The following words....

*"When you're lost in your deep and darkest place around,  
May my words walk with you, home, safe and sound" ....*

are not what you would expect to see in a job description, but they do reflect the deeper sense of commitment and vocation felt by 'Geraldine', to the extent that the words read more like a prayer or a meditation . Such an intimate representation of the "person specification" for the job could be said to be at odds with the public's current view of social services, such as that represented in the media in the wake of tragedies such as the death of Baby P (Fresco, 2008) and the incidents of child abuse in Doncaster (Booth, 2009). This apparent polarisation of views (that expressed in the song and the negative views expressed in the media) arises out of the ways in which different people see the same thing, or phenomenon. Our views of phenomena are constructed from and in what comprises our own, everyday worlds. Our own particular views and perceptions of phenomena arise from the ways in which we see our own worlds and so will contrast with the ways other people view the same

phenomena. The social worker's account of her work and vocation in the above song might well be in sharp contrast to the way a vulnerable young person would describe *their* experience of social workers. For example, Box 6.1: Young people's perspective of social services (research data) includes comments made by research respondents whom I interviewed from both of my research studies, which reflect their less than positive opinions of the role of social workers, as a direct consequence of their personal experiences.

**Box 6.1: Young people's perspective of social services (research data).**

*"Since I was six I've hated social services....."*

*"....I was penniless and homeless and in a tent aged 11 and social services said I weren't homeless."*

*"Social services are fucking useless..."*

**YPD, LAC, Research Study 1**

*"So as far as....support services, they've been absolutely useless. You can't rely on any one person to make a change in somebody else's life, but they're there (and should be) to help and to push as much as they can to avoid – especially young people – from getting back into things."*

**Ben, Research Study 2**



The respondents were young offenders whose personal experiences of social services had given them a completely different, and opposite, perception of social workers to that conveyed through the words of the song, shown in Diagram 6.1. Their different perceptions serve to highlight the different ways in which people view the constructs within their lives (their jobs, personal lives and circumstances and phenomena such as the interventions of ECM/YM). These perceptions are constructed from the things that comprise their own, everyday worlds and their own particular *view* of everything in their worlds. In order to allow for an analysis of these different social realities, Heidegger and Schutz (Miller and Brewer 2003, pp 228 – 230) argued that account should be taken of the common sense, everyday standpoint that is implicit in the way every individual views his/her world. This approach has some bearing on the reality of the difficult roles of the social services and social workers who were concerned with the tragic cases of Victoria Climbié and Baby P. The key consideration here is the perspective from which social workers are now being encouraged, by social services, to consider the circumstances of vulnerable children. Recent research mentioned earlier in Section 5.6.2. (Broadhurst et al. 2009) shows that increasingly, social workers are being encouraged to view their clients as ‘case loads’ that are inextricably bound to performance targets, which have to be met within time frames for action. One outcome of this is that social workers become pressurised to look at children and their family circumstances not within their “welfare paradigm” (Broadhurst et al. 2008, p. 444) but rather as statistics to be recorded and logged. The danger with this type of working environment is that social workers become fixed on the immediate factors of performance targets and indicators. The background to my wider thinking for part 2 of this PhD thesis

has grown out of my initial decision to adopt a qualitative methodology, as argued in the Methodology Chapter 3, Part 1. After a series of discussion sessions conducted at the University of Cumbria's Summer School in 2008, a number of questions were asked of post graduate research students that inspired me to probe my own thinking about how the second research study progressed from the first. These questions were to do the way in which the writing of a PhD thesis reflects how and why particular theoretical and conceptual frameworks were selected to underpin and substantiate the research work. For my own purposes, these frameworks need to reflect the differences between the two research studies. The following section comprises a series of the significant points that arose during the Summer School and each paragraph commences with a statement (*italicised and underlined*) made during the discussion sessions.

### **6.3. A critical approach to theory.**

#### **"Different theories arise at different stages of the research process".**

I used tools from Grounded Theory for the analysis and interpretation of the first research study. For the second research study I could see I needed a different set of tools that derived from a different theoretical framework, because I was no longer looking to *induct* findings, but to uncover and probe symptoms and occurrences in people's experiences, which I hoped would direct me to those aspects of their lives and needs for which social policy was proving either ineffective or effective. This would lead me to engage in "policy research, which is informed by theoretical insights" (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p. 233). This meant

that I needed to engage with a new theoretical framework that helped me to explore and explain the context and underlying influences of the government's social policies, whilst remaining connected to the practical implications from the first research study.

*“Using different theories will elicit major sub-sections within the research dialogue and show how theory is engaging with different disciplines/fields of study such as social policy, social sciences, education”.*

This is apparent in the writing for both this Chapter and Chapter 5, in which I introduce and discuss the new theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the rationale for the second research study.

*“There is more than one way to interpret your research, so discuss this in your writing; what might have been the outcomes of using a different approach? Would a different approach have yielded a different set of findings and would these have been of any use”?*

As an exercise at Summer School, we imagined what would have been the outcomes of our research work to date if we had applied a different methodology. Using the data from the first research study, I chose to substitute the application of aspects of discourse analysis (having appraised this as a methodology in the book “New Labour, New Language?” [Fairclough, 2003]) in place of the analytic tools from Grounded Theory. In his book, Fairclough is critical of the government's “notorious taste for ‘media spin’” and asks if “presentation becomes more important than policy, rhetoric more important than substance”? (Fairclough 2003 p.145). This resonated with my own thinking at the start of this research project, when I asked if there was a difference between

government's *espoused* aims of the ECM/YM programme for change and what the welfare agencies were actually *engaging* with in their day to day work with children and young people. Whilst the aim of Fairclough's book is not theoretical, in the sense of discussing theories of discourse, or methods of discourse analysis, it provided me with a very useful, new approach with which to "re-contextualise" the rationale of the second research study. When I imagined the outcomes of using this methodology for the analysis of data from the first research study, (as part of an exercise at a post graduate summer school) I could see that they would have been completely different from those I produced using Grounded Theory. The application of discourse analysis (as it is used by Fairclough) would have yielded a range of the types of language used by the different interview respondents. In themselves, these outcomes would have been interesting, but unrelated to my research objective, which was to identify those issues connected with the ECM/YM programme that emerged as significant from the research. I would have seen that the young offenders used a completely different vocabulary to that of the adults I interviewed. I would also have noticed that there were clear differences between the vocabularies used by the adults who worked at different levels of seniority. The analysis of an interview with a case worker would have shown a focus on and descriptions of day to day/operational issues. Interviews with senior managers would reveal language and discussion concerned with more strategic issues. These types of findings would have taken me no closer to identifying which aspects of the ECM/YM programme emerged as significant. They would have given me, for example, a picture of the levels of literacy apparent across the young people. I would also have had a range of different definitions of terms such as 'integrated

services'; 'inclusion' and 'vulnerability'. But such findings would not have given me a clear picture of the issues arising from the research data that indicated where the implementation of the ECM/YM programme was proving patchy, ineffective or effective.

### **6.3.1. Which theoretical framework(s)?**

I decided that Grounded Theory would not be an appropriate analytical framework for the second research study which would differ from the first, chiefly in two aspects, discussed below.

**Structure.** The structure of the second research study needed to be different from the first. I decided this as a result of the critical appraisals I had conducted of books/texts/articles that constituted the second literature review – see Diagram 5.1 and 5.2 in Chapter 5. The evidence of my findings from the first study highlighted specific areas of the ECM programme that were not functioning effectively and those where they were very effective. These findings drew on the *practical implications* of the ECM/YM programme. I wanted my second research study to explore the new areas I had subsequently identified as problematic: the underlying social policies supporting the government's welfare reforms for ECM and whether they reflect the specific welfare needs identified in our own society or, for political reasons, they are merely "implants", plucked out of policies that were originally tailored to the needs of a different, broader society (such as the European Union, see Table 5.5, Chapter 5, A Comparison of language used across government and EU documentation.) To do this, I needed to probe those areas where the existing social policies were failing to

support the most vulnerable young people and families in society and *why* (in their terms and from their perspectives) they were seen to be failing.

**Research question/focus.** My methodology for the second research study needed to generate data that would provide me with a different sort of “insight into participants’ understanding of the *meaning* of events, situations and their own actions and responses” (Maxwell 1996 p. 17. I needed to capture data that reflected the perceptions and experiences of some of those most vulnerable young people and their families, for whom the outcomes of the ECM/YM programme were significant. To give me a balanced range of data I decided I also needed to collect evidence of the perceptions and experiences of those welfare professionals whose job it was to implement the ECM/YM changes within the overall welfare context of these most vulnerable young people and their families. These professionals would not be working exclusively in any one agency, (as in the first research study) but rather in a capacity where their work straddled/overlapped with others, such as a health professional working in a prison/offending institution or teacher with responsibility for inclusion or providing an alternative curriculum for young people who cannot access the traditional curriculum subjects at the secondary school stage. For the first research study I interviewed a number of professionals who worked in different agencies. Although this included a multi-agency welfare team from local authority D, each of these respondents was in fact working in a separate professional discipline (health, education or social services) and came together as a multi agency team for the specific purposes of sharing and using information about the looked after young people in their charge. Table 6.2,

further on in this Chapter, shows the context of the respondents I interviewed for this second research study and includes one respondent from the first study, whose data I did not have an opportunity to incorporate into the analysis for the first set of findings.

## **6.4. Research design - Research Study 2.**

### **6.4.1. Context.**

The focus of my second research study was to be different from the first and located within a new theoretical and analytic framework (as suggested in the previous section). The concepts that emerged from the second literature review informed the structure for these new frameworks, which represented a more appropriate analytical context within which to incorporate some further data captured from interviews I conducted with a young offender and a young man (Simon, see Table 6.2) for Research Study 1. The analysis and findings from the first research study focused mostly on data from the interviews with the welfare professionals. (Consistent with my original research proposal - “to explore the impact of the ECM/YM programme on professional practice across the different welfare agencies”). Within the new theoretical framework I could see opportunities for incorporating more of this original data and thus a progression from and link to the first to the second research study. This would mean that I could retain connections to the practical implications of the first research study, whilst exploring the “context of the underlying influences of the government’s social policies” within the new framework of policy research for the second. Miller and Brewer discuss policy research in terms of its “analysis of causation and consequences....(it) may focus on whether a particular antecedent is a

necessary cause of a known behaviour, or other social phenomena, or it focuses on effects of a given social phenomenon” (Miller and Brewer. 2003, p. 233) This resonates with the aims of my second research study: to identify ways in which social and educational policies are/are not successfully meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and multi deprived children, young people and families and thereby achieving/not achieving the aims of the ECM programme.

#### **6.4.2. Methodology.**

The methodology of interviewing respondents for the second research study needed to be developed (from the original study) to facilitate these new aims and purposes. In order to encourage vulnerable (and possibly distressed) people to share their feelings and perceptions with me, I felt I needed to consider a “softer” sort of interview tool. Lincoln and Guba (1981, p.165) discuss the differences between structured and unstructured interviews. Their description of an unstructured interview resonates with my aims for the second research study: “unlike the structured interview, the unstructured interview is much less abrupt, remote and arbitrary.....used most often in situations where the investigator is looking for non-standardised and/or singular information”. The concept of using this more narrative approach appeared to me far more appropriate because I was seeking to capture a “story” this time, rather than “information” that could be coded and categorised. “Coding and categorising are valuable in attempts to find and conceptualise regularities in the data....they break the data into small pieces, fostering....fragmentation. In doing this they de-contextualise the data” (Punch, 2005, p.217). Such a process was productive and effective for the first study. As I progressed towards the second study, I was



aware that I was no longer looking for 'categories' but far more contextualised 'stories' about the experiences of young people and their families that identify both the successes and, possibly, the unexpected outcomes of the government's welfare policies, which would enable me to critique existing approaches to policy making. I would need to re-contextualise, or interpret the data captured from interviews in order to identify evidence that resonates with the key concepts contained within the second contextual framework (see Diagram 5.2). A more narrative approach to interviews, in the second study, would give me an opportunity to "understand the individuals' unique and changing perspective as it is mediated by context" and this context would "take precedence over questions of fact" (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p. 2008). The findings inducted from the first research study provided me with categories of 'hard' or practical information and have helped to inform the development of this new methodology and theoretical framework, an understanding of which I am developing here, to re-frame my research for the second Study. "Broadly speaking, theoretical research aims to enhance an academic social science discipline's understanding of the world while the concerns of policy research are principally with knowledge for action and the practical application of research" (Miller and Brewer, 2003, p.233). The findings from the first research study informed my understanding, analysis and interpretation of the data from the perspective of the 'formal world', or world of work, of the welfare professionals I interviewed. The second research study is to be concerned with capturing data that will get closer to the heart of what makes the policies that support the ECM/YM programme effective/ineffective and where the government's approach to making the policies is falling short, or succeeding, in meeting the needs of the

most vulnerable children, young people and their families. I decided this would best be achieved through capturing data from discussions/interviews with a different set of respondents: offenders and their parents and partners (who could be identified as both vulnerable and hard to reach, or people for whom the welfare agencies are not always accessible) and agency professionals whose roles overlapped and interacted with the different agencies on a day to day basis. This new data would therefore have a different purpose to that of the first study; it will provide evidence of “policy research” which is “applied research intended to inform or to effect changes in social policy” (Miller and Brewer page p. 233).

### **6.5. A new theoretical framework: phenomenology**

The new issues that arose from my thinking in response to the second literature review bore little direct resemblance to the categories I had included in my conceptual framework for the first research study. Whilst the new issues could be said to be *related* to the original conceptual framework, they seemed to me far too complex to be called “categories”. Bartlett & Payne (1997, p.186) define a category as ‘merely the collection of specific ways in which a concept has appeared in the data’. The more complex issues from the second conceptual framework alerted my thinking to an altogether wider arena than the ECM/YM programme itself. They were closely connected to the life issues of vulnerable people and raised questions in my mind such as:

- what factors are at the heart of the causes of vulnerability? (This question arose from Finding 1);
- how/can vulnerability be resolved?;

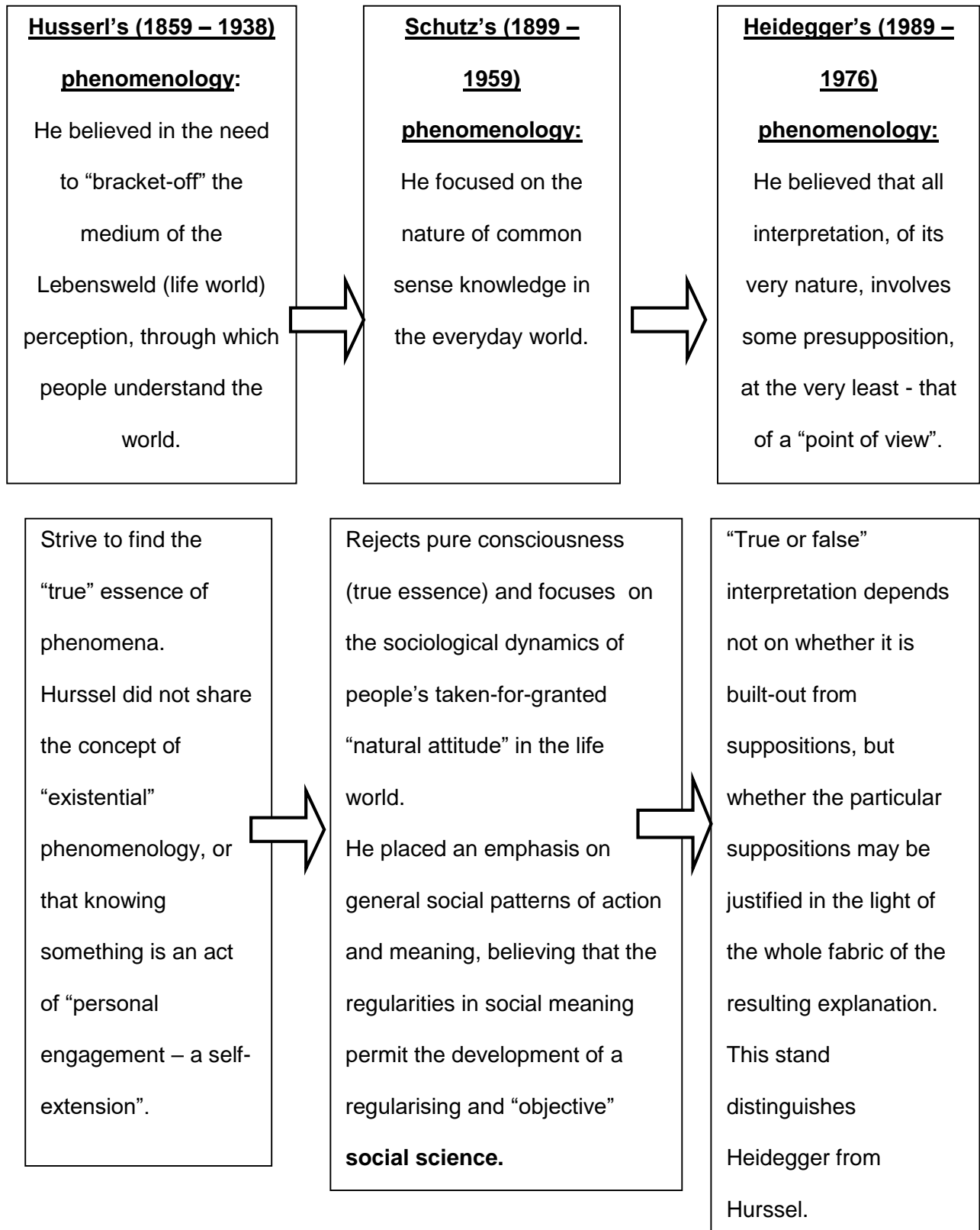
- is agency support structured according to the *degrees* of vulnerability of children and young people or do agencies become involved when difficulties and problems have crossed a “threshold” of circumstances?

I thought further about the complexity of deprivation (see Section 5.1.1. Indicators of vulnerability) and the outcomes for people suffering multi deprivation, in the light of the findings from the first research study, which highlighted the limitations of performance indicators in identifying vulnerability. The arguments I used to justify my use of grounded theory as the chosen analytic methodology for the first study could not be said to support the new theoretical framework for the second research study, for which there would need to be a different research question (my thinking towards this is shown in Diagram 6.3). Whilst I remained firmly in the area of qualitative research, the second study needed to be placed within a different contextual and theoretical framework; one that was based on a “sociological analysis of everyday life”, that got to grips with the “common sense of the ordinary members of society” through an “analysis of their understanding of the *meaning* of events, situations and their own actions and responses” (Becker and Luckman, 1984, pp.33 – 34). Such a methodology needed to go beyond the application of analytic tools and the induction of findings. It needed to reflect appropriate epistemological and ontological frameworks of understanding, because I would be working with data/evidence (knowledge) that had been “interpreted by people” and was “subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world” (ibid. pp.33 – 34). In talking with respondents and asking them about their experiences and perceptions of issues such as vulnerability, support, deprivation and achievement, I would be capturing data that reflected knowledge and

understanding that would be particular to them (structured within their own particular epistemological framework). My main focus for this study is the impact of ECM/YM policies and interventions *on the recipients* and this helped me to define, the profile of the respondents I wanted to interview. Drawing on my range of professional experience helped me to characterise the type of *further* data I wanted to capture, which I decided needed to reflect the respondents' personal perceptions and experiences. (In the longer term, I hope to see where and how the findings from this data might inform the training given to professionals who work in the children and young people's workforce and in the meantime I may be able to explore the findings further in my own professional work). The data for this second research study, then, would derive from the respondents' own perceptions of the way things appear to them in their conscious, everyday lives and also be directly connected to their own states of *being*, which needed to be reflected within the ontological framework within which I would analyse the research data. Therefore, I would require a framework for analysis and inquiry that would give this knowledge validity and theoretical meaning. "Although different analytic methods can be used to examine and provide different perspectives.....to describe a method in isolation from its roots is to adopt a 'follow the instructions' or 'technological fix' approach to methodology" ( Ribbens and Edwards, 1998, p.16). To avoid this outcome, that of merely 'ticking the box', I needed to ensure the tools with which I analysed the data would fit with my own "epistemological approach to the topic" (ibid). From my reading, such a framework is to be found in phenomenology, or the discipline of "philosophical investigation" (Stewart and Mickunas, p.3). This knowledge, or data, would not be positivistic or scientifically "provable" but

would derive from “within, from the standpoint of lived life” (Friedman, 1991, pp. 3 – 9) which is how Friedman defines existentialism. He goes on to describe this further as the “literary and philosophical movement ....with an emphasis on the existing individual and a call for a consideration of man in his concrete situation, including his culture, history relations with others and – above all - the meaning of his personal existence” (ibid p. 63). These statements relate directly to aims of my second research study, which is to glean people’s different perspectives and points of view about vulnerability, multi deprivation *as they see them affecting their own lives*. This context for my research gives me both an epistemological and ontological framework of understanding to inform and contextualise the methodology and analysis for my second Research Study. Diagram 6.2, Phenomenology as a method of inquiry – Development over Time, outlines how phenomenology, as a method of inquiry, has developed through the years and been interpreted by different philosophers. It also helps to show how a philosophical concept of knowledge has been shaped over time - without going too deeply into the essence of the philosophy itself.

**Diagram 6.2: Phenomenology as a method of inquiry – development over time.**



Husserl's ideas entered social science through the work of Alfred Schutz, who developed Husserl's ideas and focused on there being a 'common sense' knowledge in the everyday world, placing an emphasis on general social patterns of action and meaning. This acknowledgement of regularities in *social* meaning permitted "the development of regularising an 'objective' social science" and "Schutz's ideas gave validity and authority to the arguments of qualitative researchers" (Miller and Brewer 2003, p. 229). However, like Husserl, Schutz's ideas about understanding and meaning "remained at the abstract level" (ibid. p.229). Heidegger, a contemporary of both Husserl and Schutz claimed that "all interpretation, of its very nature, involves some presupposition, at the very least....of a point of view" (Langan 1959, p. 215). This stand distinguishes Heidegger's thinking from that of Husserl's, who maintained that....."the phenomenologist could know the essence of things as they are in themselves...." (ibid. p. 215). For the purposes of the theoretical framework for this second research study , Heidegger's approach to representing the interpretation of people's individual understanding (of "things" or phenomena) is the most relevant because it provides me with an appropriate context against which to argue/construct the outcomes from the analysis of the data.

## **6.6. Links between vulnerability and conditions for learning.**

Hockings' research (Hocking, 2009) is concerned with student-centred learning; however she acknowledges that the critical review of the literature goes into the (very interesting) area of the limitations of various learning theories. These theories describe "the variation in *what* and *how* students learn and, to some

extent explains where students' approaches to learning spring from, but because the interview questions were set in the context of specific tasks, topics or settings, the student appeared to respond with the immediate context in mind rather than considering other influences in their lives" (ibid. P.85). Hockings saw this as an absence of the "individual biographies" of the students concerned, which she considered to be highly significant in explaining variations in learning and which provided the basis of a model that "considers students' prior experiences, perceptions, approaches and outcomes to be simultaneously present in their awareness". These finer grained aspects of learning (when compared with the "whats" and "hows" of the above evidence based approach to capturing data) take into account the affective and social factors that affect the degree to which a student internalises and engages with new knowledge. They are to do with the closely knit web of influences that act upon any of us at any given time: "how her sick grandparent must be feeling"; "what she is going to do in her lunch break" and the myriad external and internal factors that play on our conscious and sub conscious thinking, which in turn affect the degree to which we engage with learning. Further to this, Hockings drew on Mann's (2001) research, which identified "alternative perspectives on the student experience, focusing on alienations and engagement...and which "offers seven different ways of understanding surface behaviour" (ibid. P.86). These seven categories incorporate the conditions that prevail in a student's life (social, political, economic and institutional) and how these contribute to their own sense of "security, identity and stability or to a deep sense of alienation". They also resonate with the type of categories and sub categories contained within the



Vulnerability Index (see Appendix, Table A 1.2) which were constructed by teachers to help them identify the symptoms of vulnerability in pupils and students.

**Table 6.1: Mann’s conditions of learning compared with factors of vulnerability (taken from Vulnerability Index, Appendix Table A1.1)**

<b>Vulnerability Index sub category.</b>	<b>Mann’s seven ways of understanding learning (conditions and outcomes for students).</b>
Difficulty making and maintaining relationships with peers	Social conditions; sense of identity
Separation/loss/bereavement	Social conditions; sense of security; sense of stability
Known ethnic minority or Traveller heritage	Political and economic conditions; sense of identity
Child Protection/Looked After Children issues	Institutional and political conditions; sense of alienation; sense of security; sense of stability
Disability issues	Economic conditions; sense of security, sense of alienation

The contents of Table 6.1, Mann's conditions of learning compared with factors of vulnerability, highlights the similarities between Mann's categories and those from the Vulnerability Audit. We can see how Mann's categories relate to the categories of vulnerability; in the first row of the table, relationships with peers (Vulnerability Index) is comparable with social conditions and sense of identity (Mann's categories); Child Protection issues compare with institutional and political conditions and senses of alienation, security and stability. Matching the categories from Mann's alongside the Vulnerability Index sub-categories supports further the arguments made in Chapter 4 in favour of the more contextualised nature of the Vulnerability Index over the quantitative, evidence based national performance indicators. The similarities between these two sets of categories in Table 6.1 reinforce how closely intertwined a child's/young person's personal circumstances are with their capacity to learn.

Therefore, the circumstances of vulnerability and deprivation can be seen to equate with poor conditions of learning; poor conditions of learning in turn give rise to a child's/young person's negative sense of security, identity and stability. In Diagram 6.3, The emerging theoretical and analytical framework: stages of thinking, I have indicated some of the stages in my thinking about a new title, or research question, for the second research study. These stages reflect something of the range of the different issues I drew on from the literature and the new theoretical, contextual and analytical frameworks discussed earlier in this Chapter.

**Diagram 6.3. The emerging theoretical and analytical framework: stages of thinking.**

**Stage 1.** Every Child Matters: a social policy or an “ism” (the expressing of ECM’s aims and initiatives in a format and language that locates within a particular system or political ideology).



**Stage 2.** Do New Labour’s social policies ensure unequivocal *engagement with* or do they merely *espouse* support *for* the aims of Every Child Matters?



**Stage 3.** Every Child/Youth Matters - Idealism or ideology? Are the government’s social and welfare policies fit for purpose?



**Stage 4.** Is the government’s championing for effective integrated services, early intervention and improved life chances for the most vulnerable children, young people and their families simply a part of the process of modernising the welfare services away from the “statism” of post war years, towards the processes and systems of new managerialism?

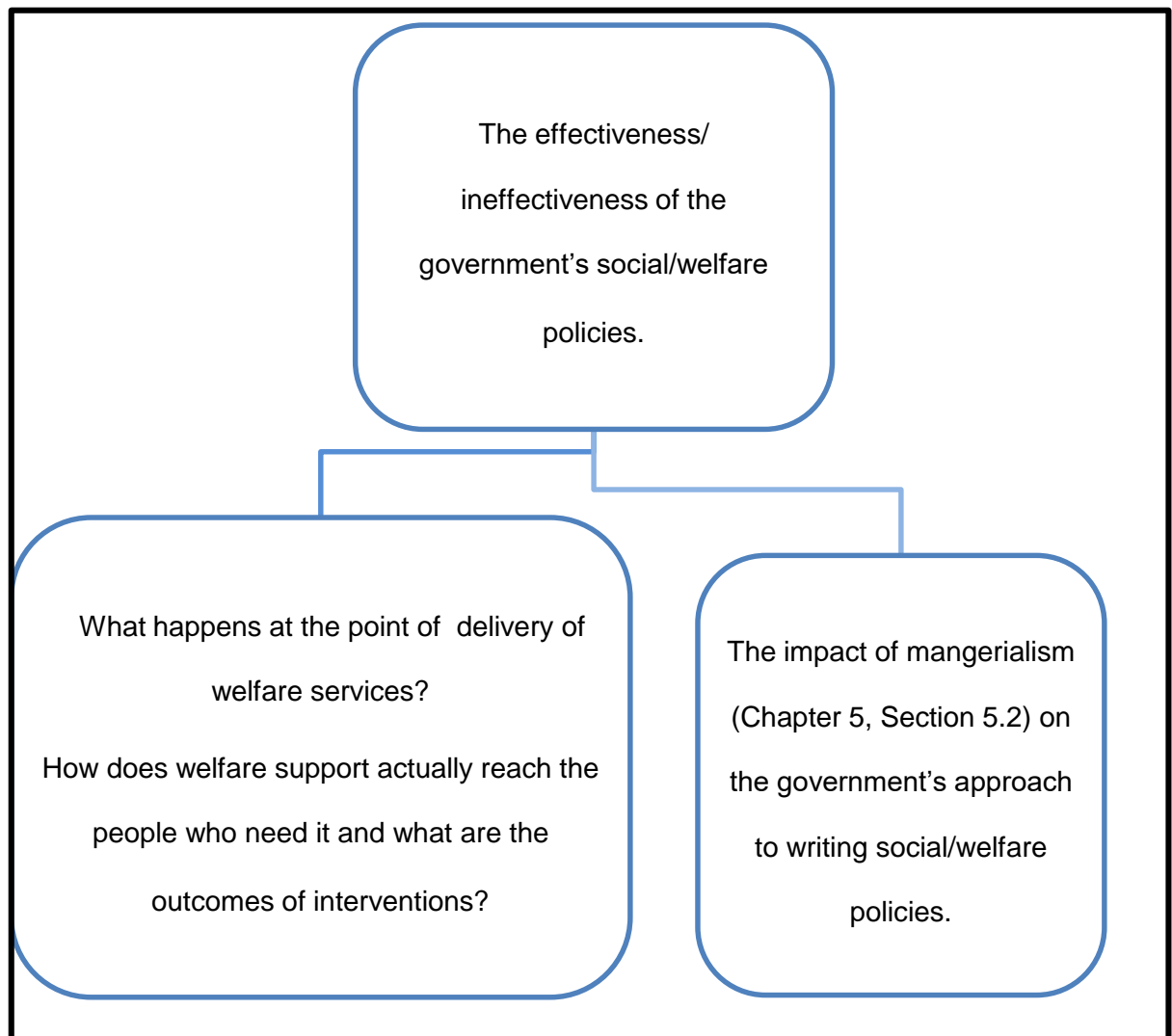
The four stages in the diagram reflect different lines of discussion that I followed in the literature and used subsequently to inform and re-phrase the original research question for the second research study. These processes provided the impetus for a paper I have presented at conference, (Hough 2008) in which I explore and discuss some of the issues raised within the literature in more depth. At the heart of my research studies is a desire to probe the effectiveness

of the welfare services that support children, young people and their families and to question the systems and policies that underpin them. This is reflected in further questions:

- Are the services meeting the needs of people, especially those at the extremes of deprivation?
- How do the welfare services know what people need?
- Does the government “conceptualise” our welfare needs (rather than find out what they are first and then write the policies to make provision for them)?
- Are social/welfare policies predicated on a London-centric view of need and vulnerability or a UK-wide view that takes account of localised need?

These questions helped me to develop my own thinking around the overall research question to be asked in this second research study and suggested a particular direction for my approach, the extent and range of which is indicated in Diagram 6.4: Development of the second research question.

**Diagram 6.4: Development of the second research question**



One title to emerge as a result of the above considerations was:

***“A critical analysis of the government’s social/welfare policies that underpin the aims of the ECM programme. Are these policies fit for purpose?”***

At the time of writing, (March 2009) I hoped that this would prove suitable for the overall title of this second research study.

## **6.7. The direction of Research Study 2.**

### **6.7.1. The complexity surrounding vulnerability and multi deprivation.**

After conducting the second literature review and also going through the experience of my Transfer Panel, I made decisions about what type of data I wanted to collect for the second research study and, therefore, the purpose and function of interviews I was to conduct. I decided that interviewing remained the most appropriate method of collecting data. Through pursuing leads within the Cumbria Police Authority, it appeared likely that I would be able to interview agency professionals who worked within a new initiative in Cumbria, the Scafell Project. This is a county-wide approach towards tackling crime and working with the most prolific offenders, set up to ensure that the Police Service supports national best practice in rehabilitating offenders, using The National Offender Management Service approach, through a single offender manager having 'case management' responsibility for an offender at all stages through their sentence. I followed up what I had read about the Scafell Project because after reading in detail about the role of the professionals who had this single offender manager responsibility (their official title was 'assertive outreach worker') I was struck by the similarities between this role and the work of some of the multi agency professionals I had interviewed for the first research study, particularly in local authority D (Chapter 4, Section 4.3). If I was to consider the role of assertive

outreach worker in more detail, the main focus of my research would shift from that of children and young people, to that of older young males (aged from 16 years, to their early twenties) and possibly male adults in their late twenties and early thirties (which I had been told was the typical age and gender profile of the offenders on the Scafell Project). I saw this adjustment as entirely consistent with my original research question, because these older young people and adults would represent the current and future fathers of children who might become young people whose lives had taken the same unfortunate turns as those of the young people I interviewed for the first research study. Through interviewing these older, male offenders I would have the opportunity to explore how *they* perceived the nature of the welfare provision they had received and gain an insight into their particular circumstances of vulnerability and deprivation. This would provide me with valuable contextual data about people who experience a high degree of vulnerability in their lives and their personal experiences of welfare provision. With this type of data I could avoid the pitfall of making a “judgement [that] is not contextually grounded” and based on assessments that are effectively “ticking a box, looking at cause and effect variables, which is to restrict moves at a discursive level towards a child welfare paradigm of intervention” (Broadhurst et al. 2007 p.444). With this fuller, more contextualised dataset I hoped to be able to conduct an analysis of data that went beyond the “forensic activities of evidence gathering” which, as an approach “has been widely reported as acting against the effective and holistic identification of need and support, based on those needs” (ibid. p.445). Therefore, I initially decided I would focus on two sets of interview respondents: offenders/ex-offenders from the Scafell Project (or a similar

project, if I could identify one such) and the partners and mothers of offenders, a group of people whom I was introduced to through a voluntary organisation called Partners of Prisoners. My reasons for focusing on these two sources of respondents were guided by the new, critical approach to my thinking that developed from the second literature review, which in turn helped to prescribe the rationale for this second research study. In Chapter 5, I refer to one of the inadequacies of “using a ‘forensic’ indicator to judge provision, need and vulnerability”....which means judgement is not contextually grounded. This restricts moves “at a discursive level towards a child welfare paradigm of intervention” (Broadhurst et al. 2007, p. 444). This critical approach, when evaluating professional practice in the welfare agencies (in this case, Sure Start), guided me towards a closer examination of two aspects of the methodologies for my first and second research studies.

- a) It provided further support for the evidence from my first research study, which suggests that the process for the support of young people from multi deprived backgrounds is, in many cases, triggered by the application of centralised performance indicators. This process does not have the capacity to “identify the more subtle or nuanced changes in children’s behaviour that could flag up factors that might indicate them as vulnerable” (Chapter 5, p. 5).
- b) Using this approach extended the scope of my literature review and directed me towards a consideration of the overarching, complex issues that encompass both vulnerability and multi deprivation. I began to see that my second research study would give me the opportunity to explore the two concepts, vulnerability and multi deprivation, from first principles.



Shaping my research towards an investigation of vulnerability and multi deprivation as the *root causes* of “educational failure, ill health, ....crime and anti-social behaviour” (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s Treasury, 2003c, p.11) would be a shift from the initial research question, which focused solely on government initiatives such as the ECM/YM programme, and the *effects* of vulnerability and multi deprivation. This change in the direction of the research would also provide me with an opportunity to analyse the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the government’s welfare policies and the circumstances in which they fail to tackle the fundamental causes of vulnerability and multi deprivation.

I decided to include a different set of respondents for the second research study; professionals who worked in roles that overlapped with two or more of the welfare agencies (education, health, criminal justice or social services). Because of the interconnectedness of their work, I felt they would be able to speak about their “clients” from a number of different perspectives: their own professional agencies, their knowledge of their clients’ personal/home backgrounds and the barriers to providing support that is targeted at reducing the effects of vulnerability and multi deprivation.

The second literature review and the findings from my first research study suggest that the causes of multi deprivation are highly complex. The *factors* that constitute multi deprivation are interlinked with a family’s practical and physical circumstances, such as worklessness, poor housing, mental illness and poverty. If we then examine the *symptoms* that help to identify vulnerability in children and their families, (Vulnerability Index, Appendix, Table A 1.2) we can see that these embrace a wide range of fine-grained, inter-related aspects of a child’s

holistic development such as social relationships, achievement at school, parenting issues and the extent to which the family engages with school.

Outlines of both sets of categories are shown in Diagrams 6.5 and 6.6.

**Diagram 6.5: Disadvantages experienced by families that reflect the cross-cutting nature of social exclusion (constituting multi deprivation).**

(Social Exclusion Task Force 2007 p. 8).

1. No parent in the family is in work.
2. Family lives in poor quality or overcrowded housing.
3. Neither parent has any qualifications.
4. Mother has mental health problems.
5. At least one parent has a longstanding limiting illness, disability or infirmity.
6. Family has low income (below 60% of the median).
7. Family cannot afford a number of food and clothing items.

**Diagram 6.6. Factors that constitute vulnerability.  
(from Local Authority G, 2007).**

10. Ethnicity/Language.
11. Special Educational Needs.
12. Family and parenting issues.
13. Engagement with family.
14. Health issues.
15. Transition issues.
16. Exclusions.
17. Anti Social behaviour.

Using this wider understanding of the complexity of factors that constitute multi deprivation, I decided that if I had a chance to speak to fathers and/or members from those families that experience this degree of multi-deprivation I would get a first hand account of their perceptions of the support agencies and how effective they are in helping them to cope with the constraints and difficulties of their circumstances. If the small but significant 2% of families with multi deprivation are to be firmly in the foreground of my second research study, I considered that I needed to be able to identify potential respondents whose circumstances corresponded to the *issues* that constitute multi deprivation (Diagram 6.5) or to any of the *symptoms* of vulnerability (Diagram 6.6). This supported my decision to work with the Scafell Project, and/or similar, and the voluntary organisation of Partners of Prisoners. I explain the structure and rationale of Partners of Prisoners (POPS) in full detail in Chapter 7. At this juncture it is sufficient to

state that I established a successful working relationship with POPS through an introduction from the same contact who had introduced me to the Scaffell Project.

### **6.7.2. Before and beyond deprivation and disadvantage.**

Factors and circumstances beyond the physical and practical aspects of day to day life play a highly significant role in a baby's development, which sets down the template for the rest of their lives. "Children need above all to be loved. Unless they are loved, they will not feel good about themselves and will in turn find it difficult to love others" (Layard and Dunn 2009, p. 15). This report draws on the research of the child psychologist John Bowlby, who fifty years ago wrote that "the basic need is for an enduring tie to at least one specific person" (ibid, p. 15). The Report argues that this core feature of early development has stood the test of time; "attachment grows from the interaction between parental love and the response of babies to their parents. It requires high levels of warmth from parent or caregiver and sensitivity in their responses to their baby's needs.....This style of parenting does not mean no routine – but, rather a routine based on a sympathetic understanding of how the child feels inside....Some children never experience this type of affection. Many children have to be cared for by the state and often experience frequent changes of foster parents or of carers in children's homes. They deserve better than this" (ibid. p.16). This analysis further confirms the complexity of the circumstances that contribute to the cycle of deprivation in those families who are close to the margins of extreme vulnerability. So we have to consider the raft of physical and circumstantial factors that contribute to deprivation and vulnerability in tandem

with an understanding of what goes wrong for many vulnerable children right at the start of their lives. Within a welfare context, this suggests that any model of support, care and development should reflect the differing (and changing) sets of circumstances and factors that give rise to people's states of vulnerability. In order to construct such a model of support, welfare agencies would need to be able to identify the *factors* that constitute multi -deprivation (Diagram 6.5) for a child, young person or family as well as the *symptoms* of vulnerability (Diagram 6.6) presented by the child or young person and in turn, this would depend on the effectiveness/extent of the tools used to assess their needs.

## **6.8. Research Study 2. Implementing the research design.**

### **6.8.1. Limitations and difficulties.**

As discussed in the previous section, the respondents for the second research study were to have been offenders on Scafell Project. During March 2008 I approached an assertive outreach worker at one of the Cumbrian police stations where a regional Scafell Project was based. She and her team had expressed an interest in my research work and been enthusiastic about co-operating with the arrangements for setting up interviews. The team comprised a very dedicated group of agency professionals who had consistently high levels of success, in terms of reducing the incidence of reoffending amongst their clients. However, when it came to the time for setting up these interviews, the assertive outreach worker (AOW) had left to go on maternity leave and had been replaced by another AOW. Unfortunately, my attempts to communicate with this replacement professional proved unsuccessful. (I surmised this was because of

the lack of any “handover” of my original negotiations with the team. Much later I learned that the new incumbent lasted only a short time in the role and was moved on elsewhere). I was therefore presented with a pressing difficulty to overcome. I had recorded in my PhD journal on July 28th 2008: “Am now at the point where I need to start setting up the interviews for the Final Study”. By September 2008 I was no closer to setting up the interviews because of the lack of response from the new AOW. I therefore took action to address the problem through a personal contact within the Cumbria Police Authority, who directed me to another Scafell project elsewhere in the county. As a result, I was able to meet the AOW and her probation officer colleague at the Eastland (not the real name) station and we successfully negotiated that I could conduct interviews with offenders, either at their police station or a probation centre. This was a relief to me, because I was concerned that the delay would put defer significantly the conclusion of the writing up my thesis. At Eastland station the Scafell team were equally supportive of my research work but we were presented with another set of difficulties and limitation, in the form of the fragility of the offenders concerned. Each time the team lined up two or three interviewees for me, the offenders concerned would go “AWOL” (a euphemism for them going “on the run”, or skipping the terms of their licence), would subsequently be re-arrested and sent to prison again. This happened about three times altogether, bringing me up to late March 2009 with still no interview respondents.

### **6.8.2. Serendipity.**

I achieved an unexpected breakthrough towards arranging the interviews for the second research study through a chance conversation with some local contacts who were multiagency professionals, working in education and health. One of them worked at the front line in education provision as an Inclusion Manager and the other was a senior manager in the NHS, with responsibility for the management of health in prisons. I conducted two in-depth interviews with these welfare professionals and through these contacts I was introduced to a local charitable organisation, which provided support to young male adult offenders. This organisation, CPDA, helps young and older offenders to rehabilitate their lives and provides a wide ranging package of support for these young people, particularly at those times in their lives when they are at their most vulnerable. (I discuss LSA in more detail in Chapter 7). Through my new contact at CPDA I arranged to conduct 3 interviews with young, male offenders, (aged 17 – 24 years) and, quite by chance, one of these respondents had very recently been under the support of an AOW on a local Scafell scheme. This proved fortuitous because it gave me the opportunity to access evidence of practice from the Scafell Project, despite having been unsuccessful in setting up interviews with the scheme in the first place.

### **6.8.3. Interview respondents for the second research study.**

The interview respondents for research study 2 are shown in Table 6.2. At this point it is worth drawing attention to the fact that during the analysis of data for this research study I found it useful to refer back to data from an interview I had

conducted for the first research study with Simon, a young man (18 years old) who had been a looked after child from the age of 8 years.



**Table 6.2: Interview respondents for Research Study 2.**

<b>Client</b>	<b>Welfare professionals</b>	<b>Name/M/F; Age</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Individual group/ interview</b>
<b>Young (male) adults who had offended. Each was supported by a not-for-profit organisation, CPDA.</b>		Male; Chris; 24 years	Persistent offender	Individual
		Male; Aiden; 17 years	Persistent offender	Individual
		Male; Ben; 17 years	Persistent offender	Individual
	<b>Multi agency professionals</b>	Female	NHS Health Manager at local HMP prison.	Individual
		Female	Senior Inclusion Manager, local secondary schools, FE college and work placements.	Individual
<b>Parents and partners of prisoners</b>		Male and Female	Group of mothers, a father and partners of young offenders.	Group of 5
		Female	Partner of one adult prisoner serving a life sentence.	
	<b>Voluntary organisation: Partners of Prisoners (POPS)</b>	Female. (POPS).	Family Services Development Manager from Partners of Prisoners	Individual

	<b>Police and probation services agency (Scafell Project).</b>	Male and Female	Assertive outreach workers: professionals who worked as serving police officers and probation officers.	Two interviews each with 2 people.
<b>Young person in care (respondent from Research Study 1)</b>		Male; Simon; 18 years.	A young man who had been a looked after child and young person since the age of five years.	Individual
<b>TOTAL INTERVIEWS WELFARE PROFESSIONALS</b>	<b>7</b>			
<b>TOTAL INTERVIEWS CLIENTS (SIMON WAS INTERVIEWED IN RESEARCH STUDY 1)</b>	<b>3</b>			
	<b>TOTAL INTERVIEWS</b>			<b>10</b>

The outcomes of Simon's life were in direct contrast to those of all the respondents for the second research study. He had been successful at school and had gained the offer of a place at university. However the circumstances of his very early years, before he was placed with foster parents, had been almost identical to those experienced by Chris, an offender aged 24 years. Through comparing the profiles of these two young men, I was able to use the evidence from Simon's interview transcript to support one of the key findings that emerged from the data analysis of the second study.

## **6.9. Method of data analysis.**

The analytical methodology I used for the first research study drew on grounded theory and incorporated an induction of the findings. As I have argued in this chapter (Section 6.5) this second study is concerned with people's stories about and perceptions of their experiences of welfare agency interventions. The methodology for analysis therefore needs to have the capacity to allow for, and uphold, the *nature* of the data, which derives from the respondents' personal interpretations of their experiences. The data was more narrative than that for the first study, because "I was seeking to capture a story.... rather than 'information' that could be coded and categorised" (Section 6.4.2.). Whilst the overarching theoretical framework for the study is that of phenomenology, several elements from interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) also lend themselves for consideration. Whilst I aim to capture "and explore personal experience [that] is concerned with an individual's personal perception(s)", at the same time "access depends on and is complicated by the researcher's own conceptions" (Smith 2006, p.51). This describes accurately my own position as researcher: "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world". Smith argues that as part of the process of trying to understand what it is like from the point of view of the research participants, IPA can also involve "asking critical questions of the texts [transcripts] such as: Do I have a sense of something going on here that maybe the participants themselves are less aware of" (ibid. P. 51)? I used the idea behind this in my model for analysis and this is apparent in stage 2 of my model for analysis, which is illustrated in Box 6.6, Model for Analysis Research Study 2. The model lists the four stages of the process for analysis, in which stage 2 allows for the

identification of the personal reflections of the respondents, in particular where these represent;

- a) truly original or unique observations/perceptions.
- b) any conflicts within the data – ie where the data showed conflict across or within the transcripts.

For this second study I was seeking a method of analysis that would go beyond the basic coding processes and enable me to “make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” and capture examples of data that might be “quirky” and therefore truly authentic (and free of any bias from my own perceptions). I decided that conducting the analysis of the data from the viewpoints shown in (a) and (b) above would allow for a critical perspective to emerge, which would be consistent with my research question:

*“A critical analysis of the government’s social/welfare policies that underpin the aims of the ECM programme. Are these policies fit for purpose?”* (see section 6.6).

Using these approaches in the methodology for my analysis would fit with (my) own “epistemological approach to the topic” (Ribbens and Edwards 1998, p.16). The analytic tools selected from grounded theory provided me with an effective methodology for data analysis for the first research study, which was well matched to my conceptual framework. For this second research study I decided that I would use a different methodology and carry out the initial coding of transcripts by using Atlas ti software. I considered the facility within Atlas ti for structuring “maps” of codes, memos and quotations to be an efficient and

effective tool for identifying where categories and aspects overlapped across the different interview transcripts. I was aware, however, that Atlas was a technological tool and so could not provide me with a method of analysis beyond the mechanics of coding and identifying categories. With this in mind, I was very interested to read about “.... the lack of training on data analysis, the difficulties of finding appropriate support...from other researchers and the increasing move to equate computer ‘coding’ with qualitative data analysis”(Ribbens and Edwards 2008, p. 120). These authors go on to say: “Writers make the point that compared to other stages of the qualitative research process, (eg entering field or data collection methods) data analysis is still largely neglected”. This is borne out by my own experience of attending a qualitative analysis training course. The activities we worked on were those of coding and identifying recurring categories of issues within interview transcripts, which I already felt confident about. What I had really hoped to learn was a process of analysis (other than grounded theory), that I could apply *after* the categories and codes had been established. I needed answers to the broader questions about how to ‘do’ analysis; yet there are “very few examples of how [the] general methodological principle can be practically operationalised....in terms of the data analysis” (ibid. 120).

The advantages of using the software were that it would give me the opportunity to become thoroughly immersed in the data through a systematic process of identifying categories and key issues that was far less “longhand” than the processes I undertook using grounded theory tools; I could identify chunks of text quickly using cut and paste technology and create separate folders and maps of the categories at the click of a mouse. However, the whole process of

qualitative research is difficult to express in a sequential, linear fashion. In Chapter 3 I discuss this in terms of the “myth that regards qualitative research as “soft, unscientific, ‘touchy-feely’ messing....seeking opinion rather than facts” (Ely et al. 1991, p. 102). Ribbens and Edwards describe such difficulties as deriving from the fact that whilst data is of a subjective, interpretative nature, we (the researchers) have to interpret the respondents’ words in “some way, knowing there are probably any number of other ways in which they could be interpreted” (Ribbens and Edwards 2008, p. 122).

**Box 6.6: Model for Analysis (Research Study 2).**

1. Read the transcripts for the stories and issues arising.
2. Pinpoint the personal reflections of the respondents and in particular where these represent;
  - a) truly original or unique observations/perceptions.
  - b) any conflicts within the data – ie where the data showed conflict across or within the transcripts.
3. Identify themes and experiences that highlight the role of the voluntary sector in particular.
4. Break down the data during analysis and then “break up” (as in “up”-load) to reveal/construe where the reflections, ideas and emerging themes can be aligned to the context of critical social policy.

The authors addressed this difficulty in their own research, and in their interpretations of interview transcripts, through taking note of the areas of difference and overlap “with other participants’ accounts” and then embarking on a “voice-centred relational method of data analysis” that involved four readings of the data, followed by “summaries and thematic breaking down of the data” (ibid p. 124 – 125). I have adapted and applied these stages of the authors’ methodology of analysis to my own model for analysis (Box 6.6, Model for Analysis (Research Study 2)). This model provides a very straightforward methodology for analysing the interview transcripts without the need to “discover” the categories through the data, as I did using grounded theory in the first research study. I felt that my inclusion of “truly original or unique observations/perceptions” to be a significant decision in structuring a method of analysis for this second study. It will only be through identifying the truly original or unique observations made by the respondents that I will be able to gain an “understanding (of) how participants make sense of their personal and social world” and discover *perceptions* of welfare support that I could never have conceptualised without this type of evidence. Through including this emphasis within my model for analysis, I hoped to avoid the potential bias that might be apparent through a purely subjective analysis of the data, for which I could be criticised as being “more intuitive than anything else” (Ribbens and Edwards 2008, p.121). I hoped also to pinpoint any *conflicts* across the data and use this evidence to construct arguments to explain/interpret the outcomes of particularly ineffective (or effective) welfare interventions described by the respondents. I also included in this model for analysis, “Identify themes and experiences that highlight the role of the voluntary sector in particular”. This inclusion was in

direct response to the interviews I conducted with and through the voluntary organisation Partners of Prisoners (POPS). I was shocked at just how heavily the partners and mothers of the prisoners relied on the managers and voluntary workers from POPS for practical and emotional support. The extent of my reaction was compounded by the fact that POPS receives no long term or stable streams of funding from the government, but has to rely on funding that is often re-directed from existing initiatives (such as Drug and Alcohol Support within a local authority). I saw this as an issue that could be of overall significance to the research study and so decided to include this in my model for analysis. In the event, the whole issue of the role of the voluntary sector in providing welfare support to some of the most vulnerable respondents was one of the key findings. Through using the more structured approach, shown in Box 6.6, Model for Analysis (Research Study 2) I would keep the focus on the original data and (I hoped) avoid the danger of prioritising those issues that accorded to my own personal views, rather than those of the respondents.

Through applying their method of data analysis Ribbens and Edwards (p.125) were keen to develop a sociological focus to their research; they discuss the “relational ontology” that exists across the different research respondents in terms of the philosophical view that people are interdependent rather than independent and that they are seen as “embedded in a complex web of intimate and larger social relations”. (This idea has some basic similarities to Heidegger’s phenomenological approach to the interpretation of meaning, as referred to in Diagram 6.2: Phenomenology as a method of inquiry – development over time). My research purpose is less complex; I am seeking a method of analysis that will hold as closely as possible to the original voice of the respondents in the



emerging issues and themes. This voice is germane to the rationale for research study 2, which is to seek (from people whose lives are enmeshed in circumstances of extreme vulnerability), personal accounts, experiences and perceptions of welfare agency provision (see Chapter 5). However, my reading of Ribbens' and Edwards' research experiences inspired me to think about ways of formalising my research analysis in order to give it a direction, or meaning, that would enable me to link emerging issues to the second conceptual framework. I therefore decided to prefigure different sets of circumstances that embodied the key areas of the second conceptual framework.

**Diagram 6.7, Interrelated theoretical issues that underpin analysis for Research Study 2.**

1. The ***models of support*** through which respondents received welfare agency provision and the extent to which this support did or did not take account of the contextual range of their changing personal circumstance, or their ***holistic welfare context***.

2. The quality of welfare provision and its impact on supporting them when they most needed it (***social exclusion***).

3. Those issues within the data that connect with the key areas of ***policy*** contained within Conceptual Framework 2. These areas are broadly categorised as:

- a) the critical social policy context;
- b) the political context;
- c) the social research/policy/social work contexts.

These sets of circumstances (or scenarios) are shown in Box 6.7, Interrelated theoretical issues that underpin analysis for Research Study 2.

Issues 1 and 2 (models of support, holistic welfare context and social exclusion) were some of the most significant concepts I identified from the second literature review (and from within the research data as it turned out) and they also reflected my own ideas about the more holistic, overarching issues to emerge from the literature such as social exclusion. I selected the three interrelated

theoretical issues in Diagram 6.7 because they reflect closely my own “specific research interests” (Ribbens and Edwards 2008 p. 125).

## **6.10. Atlas ti and its suitability for this research study.**

### **6.10.1. The advantages.**

I stated in the previous section that the Atlas ti software I used for data analysis in the second research study did not provide me with a method of analysis *beyond* the coding and identification of categories. My choice of Atlas was because I identified it as an efficient analytic tool with which to conduct the first analysis of the research data. The capacity of the software would make the initial coding process far less laborious than it had been for the first research study, for which my coding for categories was exhaustive (and in longhand) and required prolonged, concentrated periods of time in which I then applied the constant comparison tool from grounded theory. For this second study, I wanted a process for coding that I could apply across all the data *at the same time*, rather than going through it for each and every interview transcript. For this purpose Atlas ti was well matched to my needs. Having established a bank of codes I was then able to undertake a more analytical approach to the codes by creating memos. This was an important stage in the analysis because I could record my “higher order” thinking in the form of memos and then attach these to the relevant codes, thus building up a series of maps that showed how categories and memos were linked. The same was also true, but to a lesser extent, of the facility to highlight quotes within the transcripts, in order to exemplify and provide supporting evidence for the codes and memos.

**MEMO 1.**

*“There might be an interesting theme arising in this code and quote, to do with the differences between the quality of the way the workforce do their job for adults, for children and for young people. An absence of caring in the welfare workforce contributes negatively to a child’s and young person’s personal development and sense of well being. A similar absence in caring for adults contributes to some very dark times, associated with being an adult but having no real freedom or independence”.*

Memo 1 shows an example of thinking I recorded in response to particular comments made by the respondent Chris, during my interview with him. I refer in the memo to a code and a quote that I had linked together (through the software), which at the time of the first reading of the transcripts triggered an idea I had not had time to articulate whilst I was coding. On returning to the transcript, I inserted this memo, which I then had time to think around and relate to a concept that was supported substantially within the literature, which is included in my conceptual framework, (Chapter 5, Diagram 5.2, Conceptual Framework Research Study 2). The words in the memo “*associated with being an adult but having no real freedom or independence*” directed me to make the connection between this piece of data and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need and then to make reference to the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children and Young People’s Workforce (Great Britain. Her Majesty’s

Government (2005c).

The memos themselves and the ways in which they linked with the codes and quotations played an important part in enabling me to apply my model for analysis (Diagram 6.6); writing the memos was part of the fourth stage of this model, which states: “Break down the data during analysis and then ‘break up’ (as in “up”-load) to reveal/construe where the reflections, ideas and emerging themes can be aligned to the context of critical social policy”. The memo writing was effectively the ‘break up’ part of the process. After pinpointing the data that reflected truly original perceptions and conflicts (stage 2) and then identifying themes related to the voluntary sector (stage 3) I then began to formulate arguments and findings for the research through the “breaking-up” or interpretation of the data within the context of critical social policy(stage 4). This enabled me to maintain my focus on the second research question, “a critical appraisal of the influences that define the government’s approach to social policy making” (this Chapter, section 6.1) and to develop my own lines of argument to support the findings.

#### **6.10.2. The disadvantages.**

Atlas ti software enabled me to conduct the initial coding and categorising of the data comparatively quickly and efficiently, because I could assign these to their own folders and then create maps to show where they were identified across the different transcripts. The creation of memos proved a seminal part of the overall analysis because this was the first part of a more detailed, thoughtful analysis and interpretation of the data within the context of the conceptual framework.

What the software could not do for me was to “re-group” or re-assign the codes, memos and quotations into maps that neatly encapsulated particular concepts/aspects of the interrelated theoretical issues (Diagram 6.7). The reason for this was that the software is written to illustrate the inter-linkage of codes and memos through “nodes” on the maps created by the researcher, through the initial coding process. Therefore, the maps are generated automatically and to that extent are random; I could not set out to create a map for, say, the concept of “workforce” because several maps would have been generated through the different occurrences of the codes relating to “workforce” and their connections with other codes across the different transcripts. When it came to extracting the maps for further analysis, it was impossible to find one that “said it all”, so I used both the maps and printouts of the codes and memos to support my further analysis and interpretation of the data.

Therefore, the ways in which I could not use the software were:

- For grouping the maps, codes and quotes according to the stages of my model for analysis (Diagram 6.6);
- For grouping the maps, codes and quotes according to the interrelated theoretical issues (Diagram 6.7).

These grouping processes had to be done in longhand and for this I created large, A3 colour coded maps that showed the grouping of data according to ‘truly original’, ‘conflict’, ‘the voluntary sector’, ‘models of support’, ‘the holistic welfare context’ and ‘social exclusion’.

I discovered that for the exacting task of applying and synthesising all the issues from my conceptual framework in relation to the research data, my own imagination and professional experience were essential. Computer software is

written for performing many of the basic and not so basic tasks of filtering, grouping, identifying and manipulating data, not for making the creative “leaps” of thought that are at the heart of fine-grained, intuitive analysis conducted by human beings!

*“When we work as qualitative researchers we do not attempt to separate ourselves from what we know tacitly or explicitly. We use our tacit knowledge in important ways. We listen to our hunches; attend to a seemingly unrelated sense of direction that pops into our head at odd moments. We heed our own feelings that ‘this’ log entry carries relevant meaning rather than ‘that’ one” (Ely et al. 1991 p. 104).*

## **Chapter 7.**

### **7. Analysis and Interpretation of data from Research Study (2).**

#### **Introduction.**

In Chapter 6, I explain the new theoretical framework that shapes Research Study (2), which evolved out of the new research focus, and show the overall design for the study. A brief outline and discussion of these changes will serve as an effective introduction to this chapter and link the two research studies, showing where and how they compare and contrast.

#### **7.1. Key aspects of design for Research Study (2).**

“Research design is in the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions.....” (Kerlinger 1973, p. 300 in Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.221).

#### **Plan.**

This is defined as the “overall scheme or programme of the research” and includes an outline of what the researcher will do, from articulating the intention and rationale of the project through to the final analysis of the data.

The purpose of research study (1) was to explore the impact of the ECM/YM programme on professional practice across the different welfare agencies. The overall theoretical framework for this study derives from a post-positivist school of thought because my research inquiry was not suited to the conventional “scientific meta-theory of empiricism” that relies “almost exclusively on the hypo-deductive logic of statistical inference” (Bartlett and Payne 1997, p.173). I chose



to apply a grounded theory approach as my method of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 2007) because as an analytic process it represented an alternative method to that of the positivist school of thought and one that did not assume a research process that would lead to an emphasis on the accurate measurement of “hard” variables (as in the hypo-deductive method of empirical research). The overall, alternative paradigm of research is the focus of Guba and Lincoln’s book, (“Naturalistic Inquiry,” 1985), in which they consider the range of research processes that have come into being as alternatives to the empirical approach. “....cracks have begun to appear in science’s magnificent edifice as new ‘facts’ are uncovered with which the old paradigm cannot deal or explain” (ibid, preface, p.7). “But the ancient questions are not so easily stilled...they reappear in new guises.....most particularly in the ‘softer’ sciences, that is the human or social sciences”... Guba and Lincoln talk about these approaches to research as the “aliases” of naturalistic inquiry that include: the “post-positivist, ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, qualitative, hermeneutic, humanistic” approaches. I can readily locate both research studies for this thesis within this alternative paradigm; they are both qualitative and I have argued the case for a different theoretical framework for research study (2), which I have established within the theoretical framework of phenomenology. Guba and Lincoln offer a useful summary of the points of contrast between the positivist and naturalist paradigms. These can be seen in Table 7.1: Axioms of Naturalistic Research (after Guba and Lincoln) – Research Studies (1) and (2). The writers set out five axioms that represent aspects of the research process that highlight the contrast between the positivist and naturalistic (post-positivist) paradigms of research, (Guba and Lincoln 1985, p. 37). For the purposes of this thesis, I have adapted

their summary and used three of the five axioms to illustrate the differing outcomes and characteristics of the analyses of the two research studies on which this thesis is based. Of these three, the axiom with particular relevance to both of my research studies is “the possibility of generalisation”; I identify this with reference to the fact that neither set of research data could be “shoe horned” into a body of knowledge that constituted “generalisations and truth statements....free from both time and context” (Guba and Lincoln 1985, p.38). Rather, the findings that were inducted from each research study constituted an “ideographic body of knowledge” that represented the significant categories arising from the data, rather than any irrefutable statements that could be (in my case) generalised across different local authorities and welfare agencies.

The purpose of the second research study is a critical analysis of the (social) policies (and the way they are constructed) that underpin the welfare reforms that are espoused in the ECM/YM agendas. It will also explore the extent to which the policies give rise (or not) to effective welfare support for some of the most vulnerable people, at times when they most need it. The overall theoretical framework, whilst firmly positioned within the post-positivist paradigm, in common with grounded theory, has as its guiding axiom that of “the possibility of causal linkages” (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p. 38). This axiom is of particular relevance because the focus of the second study, a critical appraisal of the nature and construction of welfare policies, will appraise the government’s mechanistic approach to policy making and challenge its (the government’s) assumptions that policies/interventions can be seen as linear “causes” that can put right the negative “effects” of multi-deprivation and vulnerability

**Structure.**

This is defined as “the scheme, the paradigm of the operation of the variables” (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p.221). Unlike a conventional research design – for a scientific research project or a quantitative study – my second research study is located more within the “naturalistic” paradigm of research (see above). In Table 7.1: Axioms of Naturalistic Research (after Guba and Lincoln), I compare Research Study (1) and (2) against three of Guba and Lincoln’s axioms of naturalistic design. The Table is structured to show the areas in which both research studies relate to the naturalistic paradigm and in which respects the two studies differ, in terms of the aspects of each of the axioms.

**Table 7.1: Axioms of Naturalistic Research (Guba and Lincoln)**

Axioms about what?	Naturalistic paradigm	Research Study (1)	Research Study (2)
1. The nature of reality.	Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic	Realities were connected with specific aspects of ECM and the analytic process kept them within the conceptual framework.	Realities are multiple and constructed by each respondent, reflecting the way things appear to <i>them</i> in <i>their</i> conscious, everyday lives.
2. The possibility of generalisation	Only time and context bound hypotheses (shown through ideographic statements) are possible	The three findings were inducted directly from the analysis of the data. The way I chose to present them (as three, stand alone statements and descriptions) reflects a degree of generalisation, but this a highly contextualised “generality” that	Key issues arising from the data analysis were interpreted within the theoretical and conceptual framework of the second study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. critical social policy context;</li> <li>ii. the political context;</li> <li>iii. the social research context.</li> </ul> These elements act as “mutual shapers” (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p.152), selected for their “meaningful perspective in relation to the purpose...the investigator has in mind”.

		aligns the ECM discourse with the key categories that arose from the data analysis.	The findings are not generalisations; they reflect my analysis of the issues and aspects that emerge directly from the respondents' evidence. This "reflexivity ensures the politics underlying the ...governing assumptions....are analysed directly rather than remaining unacknowledged "(Ribbens and Edwards1998, p.122).
3. The possibility of causal linkages.	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from their effects.	<p>Linkages were made between the generalised statements that were inducted from the findings and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the contextual framework;</li> <li>• the ways in which they reflected on the quality of professional practice across the welfare agencies.</li> </ul>	There is no distinguishing between cause and effect. The key issues arising from analysis of the data show the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of welfare support, according to the perceptions of the respondents. Interpretation of the analysis will show where these issues can be allied to the structure of the conceptual framework (above). Thus, the findings are "mutually shaped" to indicate a meaningful relationship with the research question for the second research study.

One issue that arises within the comparisons shown in Table 7.1 is of particular significance to this research study. For Axiom 3, (the final cell in the fourth column) I have written: “There is no distinguishing between cause and effect, thus, the findings are ‘mutually shaped’ to indicate a meaningful relationship with the research question for the second research study”. This explains the process of the analyses I made of the research data. Whilst I do suggest *connections* between the data and the contextual framework of the study, I infer no causal, linear relationships. This is because the data derive from the respondents’ own perceptions and constructs of their particular circumstances and experiences. Through my interpretation of the analysis I draw out issues that show how, for example, the data reflects the effects of social policy on the outcomes for vulnerable young adults. Thus, the phenomenological approach and framework enable me to show how the context of the respondents *shapes* their perceptions of welfare support which I then analyse, interpret and explain in terms of one of the three inter-related theoretical issues (referred to in the next cell above) that underpinned my initial analysis of the data.

Therefore the extent to which the axiom of causal linkage is true, is similar to that for the naturalistic paradigm (“....it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects”) and that for research study 2.

### **Strategy.**

“This is more specific than the plan and includes the methods to be used to gather and synthesise the data. In other words, strategy implies how the research objectives will be reached....” (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p.221).

Both research studies follow very similar methodologies. In the first, I conducted a series of loosely structured interviews with young offenders (aged between 14 years and 16 years) and professionals across the agencies of youth justice, health, social services and education. These interviews were structured around a core of three open questions for a non-probability sample of respondents (ie the respondents were selected for me, so they were not random). As outlined above, the analysis was closely allied to the processes of grounded theory and this led to the final, inducted findings.

In the second study, I conducted a series of extended “conversations” with young male offenders aged from 18 years upwards; parents and managers from the voluntary organisation Partners of Prisoners (POPS) and welfare professionals who worked in roles that overlapped with two or more of the welfare agencies and who, because of their inter-connectedness, I felt would be able to speak about their “clients” from a number of different perspectives.

These professionals would also have a “depth of knowledge about their clients’ backgrounds and the barriers and conflicts that have to be dealt with in order for them to provide the support that is targeted to reduce the effects of vulnerability and multi-deprivation” (Chapter 7, section 7.6.2). For these “conversations” I had no set questions. I introduced areas that were relevant to the research study and asked the respondents to talk about their own circumstances and experiences where welfare support had been effective and where it had not.

This approach led to very wide-ranging conversations in some instances. My interest lay in the words they used; the examples they gave; their opinions about the people in the agencies and, where appropriate, their more personal feelings and reactions to their circumstances. My analysis involved scrutinising the data

and “studying the subjective meaning as found in the intentions of (the individuals)...then interpreting the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which individuals give meaning to social phenomena (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p.77). I used the second conceptual framework to guide me towards identifying comments that were allied in any way to the different discourses of the literature:

- the context of critical social policy;
- the political context;
- the contexts of social policy/social research/social work.

## **7.2. Paring down the initial findings.**

Table 7.2: Key issues arising from data analysis (first draft), shows the first set of key issues identified from the initial data analysis as numbering 12 in total. Whilst I felt each of these to be significant to the findings for my second research study, I could see these would be far too many to include in a closer analyse and be unwieldy to present in a summary for an audience to read. I needed to reduce or merge the issues down to a more manageable number, (those not used for this thesis, I could retain for future, post-doctoral research purposes). This process of reducing/paring down the initial findings was similar to that of the “dimensionalisation of categories” (see Chapter 3,) and of “integrating categories and their properties” that formed part of the analytical process for the first research study. This paring down would be less extensive than for the first study. I was paring down from only 12 issues, rather than the several dozen I began with in the first study.



Tables 7.3a and 7.3b show the processes of paring down the key issues from the data analysis with the “unique” category of data in the left hand column and the “conflict” data in the right. In these two tables I have also included those statements and/or quotes I wish to retain from any of the discarded issues, showing how the “distilling” process was informed by the overall evidence from the original analysis. The outcomes of the paring down processes are shown in Table 7.4: Findings/Issues for Research Study (2) pared down from the data analysis (final). It is these four key issues that constitute the findings from Research Study (2) and on which the next section is based.

**Table 7.2: Key issues arising from data analysis (first draft).**

Original and unique perceptions within the data	Conflict across and within the data.
1. Sure Start seen as a philosophy not a practice or process.	1. Contradictions within welfare support and social care – their impact on achievement.
2. Vulnerable young people: difficulties in forming relationships.	2. Conflict across the judiciary: sentencing and rehabilitation
3. Maslow and its implications for the C&YP's workforce	3. The importance of the voluntary sector to vulnerable respondents: negative comparison with support from universal services.
4. The outcomes of a patriarchal society	4. Hard lessons to learn: the importance of family links to the rehabilitation of young offenders.
5. Advocacy.	5. A “flip flop” view of the aims of ECM.
6. Vulnerable young people and self-realisation.	6. Welfare support based on a deficit model.

**Table 7.3 (a): process of paring down key issues from the data analysis (Category of data: Original).**

Unique perceptions from the data (referred to as “issues”)	Value to the analysis?	Retain or discard the issue/category?
1. Sure Start seen as a philosophy.	Comment is unique, but data supporting it does not lead to any engagement with the “axioms of research” (see Table 7.1).	<i>Discard.</i> Use the statement from the data to link with issue 1 from Table 7.3b.
2. Vulnerable young people; difficulties in forming relationships.	There was overlap between the data supporting this and other issues.	<i>Discard</i> and use the most telling comment to support analysis of other issues. Link with Maslow issue 3.
3. Maslow and its implications for the C & YP’s workforce.	Unique finding from the data. The supporting literature raises useful, critical arguments.	<i>Retain</i> and link with quotes from “forming relationships”, issue 2.
4. Outcomes of a patriarchal society.	Unique perception from the data with overlaps across the data.	<i>Retain</i> and link with quotes from “self realisation issue” 6 and “advocacy” issue 5.
5. Advocacy.	This engaged with only one argument from the literature – many overlaps with other issues.	<i>Discard.</i> Link the significant argument from the literature with patriarchal issue 4.
6. Vulnerable young people and self-realisation.	Unique finding. Much of the data links directly with “patriarchal society”.	<i>Discard.</i> Retain the most telling data and quotes to support other, linked issues.

**Table 7.3 (b): process of paring down key issues from the data analysis (Category of data: Conflict).**

Conflicts within/across the data	Value to the analysis?	Retain or discard?
1. Contradictions within welfare support and social care- their impact on achievement.	Many significant conflicts within the data, however the title does not reflect the emerging issue.	<i>Retain</i> as: “problems in matching social policies to complex needs of vulnerable people”; link with Sure Start statement from Unique issue 1 and quote from “conflict across the judiciary” issue 2.
2. Conflict across the judiciary, sentencing and rehabilitation.	Many overlaps with issue 1 (problems in matching social policies...). Engages with one significant argument from literature.	<i>Discard</i> and link significant argument to issue 1.
3. Importance of the voluntary Sector.	Highly significant to the design of the second research study. Engages critically with many aspects of the literature. Many overlaps with issue 4, “prison, families and offenders”.	<i>Retain</i> as “importance of the voluntary sector” and merge with “prison, families and offenders”, issue 4.

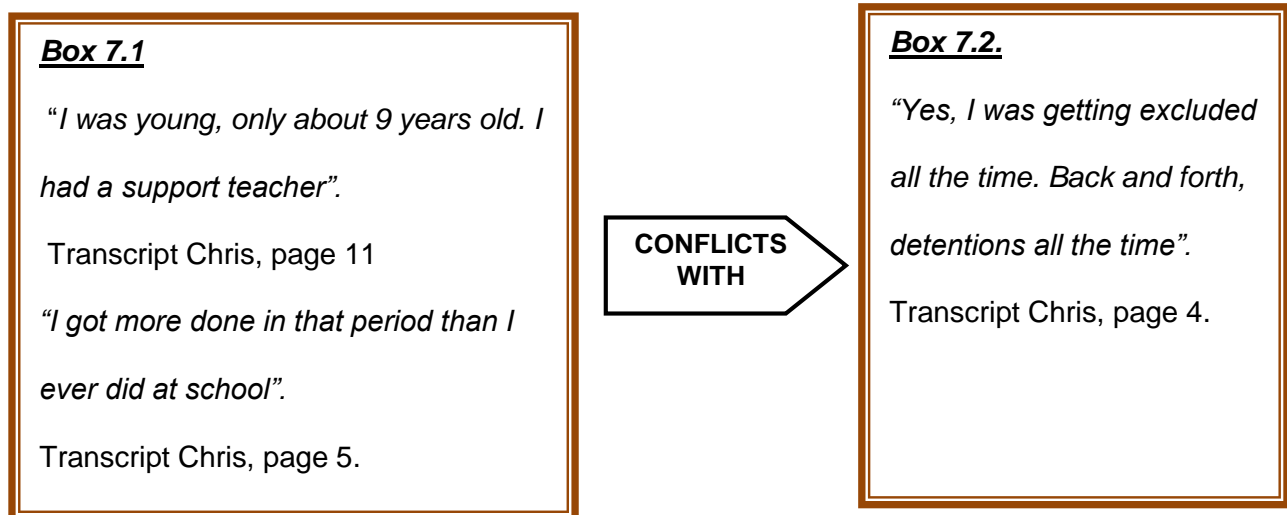
4. Prison, families and offenders: hard ways to learn lessons.	Contained many significant examples across/within the data and the literature that overlap with issue 3 in this table.	<i>Discard</i> as a discrete issue and merge with “importance of voluntary sector” issue 3.
5. A flip flop view of ECM aims.	Both original and rich in conflictual perceptions.  Engages with only one argument from the literature.	<i>Discard</i> and use quotes that illustrate engagement with literature. Link to “prison, families and offenders” issue 4.
6. Welfare support based on a deficit model.	Many overlaps with other issues. One significant critical engagement with the literature.	<i>Discard</i> and link with “problems in matching social policies” issue 1.

**Table 7.4: Findings/Issues for Research Study  
(2) pared down from the data analysis (final).**

Unique perceptions from the data	Conflict within/across the data
<p><b>1. <i>Maslow revisited – its implications for Children and Young People’s Workforce’.</i></b></p> <p>Incorporate quotes from issue 2, “forming relationships”, in Table 7.3a.</p>	<p><b>1. <i>“Problems in matching social policies to the complex needs of vulnerable people”.</i></b></p> <p>Incorporate statement from Sure Start issue 1, Table 7.3a and quote from “conflict across the judiciary” issue 2, Table 7.3b.</p>
<p><b>2. <i>“Outcomes of a patriarchal society”.</i></b></p> <p>Incorporate quotes from “advocacy” issue 5 and “self realisation” issue 6, both from Table 7.3a.</p>	<p><b>2. <i>“Important role of the Voluntary sector in supporting offenders, their families”.</i></b></p> <p>Merge with “prison, families and offenders” issue 4, Table 7.3b.</p>

### 7.3. Findings from the research data, Research Study (2).

#### Finding 1: “Problems in matching social policies to the complex needs of vulnerable people”.



#### How sustainable is the support?

Chris’ learning needs (he was diagnosed with ADHD) were identified early in his life, when he was nine years old. Despite this early identification of need, he told me that he was excluded from secondary school “all the time” (Box 7.2) and that he was “back and forth, detentions all the time”. This conflicts with his comments in Box 7.1, about the positive outcomes of his learning support. Therefore despite the early diagnosis of his learning needs, the support /intervention did not help him in his achievement later on in school when it came to gaining qualifications. He was permanently excluded from school and was then not allowed back into school during his last (GCSE) year, when he was assigned a home tutor. Of his progress during that year Chris states in Box 7.1; “I got more done in that period than I ever did at school”. There is another conflict identifiable here; between the good quality of out-of-school provision (ie suited

to Chris' learning needs) and his permanent exclusion from school (not being "allowed" to go back into school in Year 10). The out-of-school provision suited him best because his learning difficulties made the classroom situation intolerable for him (the serried ranks of desks, the large class sizes etc). His difficult behaviour in the classroom had been a determining factor in his eventual, permanent exclusion from school. If he learned best in the one to one tutoring situation, it would perhaps have been better for him to have had this as an option *before* he reached his last year at secondary school, when it was likely to be too late to make up for the learning time he had lost (through his fixed term exclusions). As I analysed the transcript of Chris' interview I inserted a memo, containing my thoughts on this, into one of the maps of interconnected issues that I had created, using the Atlas ti software. This memo is shown in Box 7.3.

**Box 7.3.**

*The comments about good 1-1 home tutoring and the amount he learned with the tutor suggest .... [a] mis-match between (this) welfare provision and the holistic paradigm....the social, spiritual, mental and physical context of a vulnerable young person like Chris. On the one hand there is very effective tutoring and learning (with his out-of-school tutor) and on the other, he....wasn't allowed back in to school....all the language he uses is to do with exclusion. How can this one pocket of good practice have any meaningful effect on his overall life opportunity when it (the good practice) is so obviously isolated from all the other aspects of his life? His learning can't possibly "blossom".*

MEMO –Chris mis-match 27/07/09. Primary document 'Chris'.



In the memo, I write about the way in which learning support for Chris appears to be in isolation to the overall/holistic context of his circumstances. The presence of a one-to-one tutor in Year 11 was a consequence of his final exclusion from school, after which he was told he was “not allowed” back into school, except to sit his examinations. Although the tutoring proved very effective according to Chris (in terms of learning) it was an *alternative* to school in his final year, not complementary and as such, only registered an impact on his learning for part of that particular school year. Therefore, this one-to-one provision was not in place long enough to have had a noticeable impact on the longer term outcomes of his life which, at the time of our interview, reflected a long list of criminal offences and imprisonment.

### **Findings supported by the literature.**

As a consequence of his early diagnosis of learning needs, Chris was assigned a support teacher when he was nine years old. This would seem to be timely; one or two years before he made the transition to secondary school. But it clearly gave him no sustainable advantage in the longer term. A diagnosis of need on its own is not necessarily a guarantee that the ensuing intervention will result in a sustainable, effective outcome.

### ***Critical social policy.***

### **The limitations of the evidence/output based approach.**

The government’s approach to (social) policy making is described as being based on “mechanistic, reductionist thinking” (Chapman, 2004, p. 10), which underlies the dominance of their (the government’s) insistence on an “evidence-

based” approach. “Whilst a policy based on evidence of what works should be more effective than without evidence, the notion that it is possible to obtain evidence of what works contains assumptions that are clearly not *universally* true” (ibid p,11). Chapman discusses this issue critically and makes the point that “evidence on which policy is inevitably based is (from) quantitative and statistical data; this conceals as much as it reveals”. The diagnosis of Chris’ learning difficulties and needs would have been part of the assessment process (and national education policy) to promote inclusion/equality of opportunity in schools, to help young children and young people with learning difficulties and to reduce their barriers to learning enabling them to achieve at the same rate as those with no learning difficulties). In Chris’ case the quantitative/statistical data corresponded to his performance in tests and academic work. The policy/intervention, the provision of a support teacher, was designed to produce the “intended outcome” (ibid, p.11) of helping him improve his performance. However what was concealed, or not revealed, through the evidence/data, were all the “unintended consequences” of Chris’ learning difficulties, such as the physical/behavioural effects of his diagnosed ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder). Chapman argues that unintended consequences, which occur at all levels of public policy, are systematically ignored because evaluation only measures the intended outcomes” (ibid, p.11). For Chris, the consequences of his ADHD meant that he found it impossible to sit and concentrate within the traditional classroom setting and his response to these circumstances was in the form of extreme behaviour, such as running away or physically disrupting the lessons. In general, the provision of a support teacher is designed to enable a student to access their teaching more effectively. Chris was not able to do this

because of his extreme behavioural problems. It would have been almost impossible for the support teacher alone to address both his specific learning needs *and* the consequences of his behaviour in the classroom. This would have required a more strategic approach from the school, one that included the support teacher and the class teacher, if these issues were to be addressed successfully (for example, devising methods for dealing with Chris' short attention span and opportunities for interim relief from the claustrophobic (for him) atmosphere of the classroom). This more holistic approach towards supporting a vulnerable young person such as Chris would have taken into consideration his range of complex needs: social, emotional and physical. An absence of this type of approach in government policy making is what Chapman discusses: "the evidence-based approach presumes a linear – or unproblematic at least – relationship between cause and effect" (ibid p. 11). As a recipient of interventions based on this approach, Chris' subsequent support for his classroom based problems was insufficient to help him with the problems that arose from the compounded, more complex issues of his personal circumstances of vulnerability and those of this ADHD.

### **Holistic versus linear approach to support - the differences in outcomes.**

*"I do think there is a problem however for those youngsters who have a history of not forming relationships because they can't or because they are guarded or judgemental about what will happen to them or they feel other people will be judgemental about them".*

Transcript Inclusion Manager, p.2.

Boxes 7.4 and 7.5 give us examples of the contrast between a strategic, holistic approach to welfare support and that of a more linear, evidence-based approach (discussed in the above section). Simon (Box 7.5) was introduced to me in the first research study by local authority D. The authority was particularly proud of what he had achieved, because he was their first young person in care (he was a looked after child who had been in foster care since he was five years old) to be offered a place at University. This is a considerable achievement because historically the achievement of looked after children in the UK is well below that of all children nationally (HMSO, 2006, p.4) across each of the Key Stages in educational attainment.

**Box 7.4.**

**Q:** *Were the teachers any help to you?*

**Chris:** *No. I never got on with them. In a way it (the one to one) was effective, but most of the time it wasn't.*

**Q:** *Did it help you?*

**Chris:** *Not really, I didn't learn much in school.*

Transcript Chris, p.12.

**CONFLICTS  
WITH**

**Box 7.5.**

**Q:** *Was there any one at school you could go and talk to if you - or a friend – had a problem?*

**Simon:** *Yes there was, like, there were a few teachers who I could approach and one mainly was my science teacher... And he was the first person in my school career who actually came to one of my meetings (with social services, for looked after children).*

Transcript, Simon p.6 – 7. Research Study (1)

From Box 7.5 we learn that Simon had benefited from valuable, additional support given to him by a teacher at school who understood and empathised with his personal circumstances that were associated with being a looked after young person. This teacher probably went beyond the “official” boundaries of a teacher’s job description, he accompanied Simon to his meetings with social services, but this gave Simon particularly valuable support, which he told me had helped him to achieve his best at school. It is an outstanding example of the

wider, more strategic form of support discussed above, which for Simon had incorporated the integration of social services, his foster parents and the school. Together each of these agencies nurtured Simon's personal development, well-being and achievement extremely effectively.

On the other hand, in Box 7.4, Chris talks about the absence of any sort of moral support or help from the teachers at his school. The conflicting evidence contained in the commentaries of these two young people highlights the importance of structuring support more holistically if it is to address both the intended *and* unintended consequences that arise due to fragile, difficult and changing personal circumstances. Chris had been unhappy in foster care from the age of 14 years and very unhappy in his own home for several years before that. Conversely, Simon had had a completely different kind of experience in his foster placement; one that was positive and warm, which is reflected in his comments in Box 7.7.

In contrast, Box 7.6 Chris explains how, with hindsight, he thinks the provision of a stable social worker instead of foster placements would have made his life easier. Again, in contrast, Simon had experienced a very stable relationship with his social worker:

*"...me and my sister had the same social worker.... and also we had the same social worker since we've been in care".*

Transcript, Simon, p. 14.

From the data analysis, the evidence in Boxes 7.6 and 7.7 shows how two sets of outwardly similar personal circumstances, for two different, vulnerable young people, were dealt with by two local authorities in different ways, which yielded contrasting outcomes for the young men, Chris and Simon.

**Box 7.6.**

**Q:** *“Would anything with regard to the foster care have helped ....or made your life better”?*

**Chris:** *“A stable social worker instead of foster places would have made (it) a hell of lot easier. They changed them all the time... and changing where I was living”.*

Transcript, Chris p. 6

**CONFLICTS  
WITH**

**Box 7.7.**

**Q:** *Over the time you’ve been looked after.... could you tell me what’s been one of the most successful part of it?*

**Simon:** *Probably my actual relationship with my foster parents and social workers and how they’ve made it easy for me to talk to and ask for help, or be there and do my thing. My foster placement, like if I’m doing something bad they can tell me off – they treat me like one of the family themselves.*

Transcript, Simon p.17. Research Study (1)

Corresponding to Chapman’s “linear-based approach”, the intervention that supported Chris’ educational welfare offered no sustainable improvements to his performance at school or his longer term life opportunities. Local authority D’s more holistic approach to/provision of welfare support proved highly successful for Simon, because it provided him with integrated support across the welfare agencies that were “willing to work jointly with those who have other perspectives and to reflect on the outcomes of their actions....” (Chapman, 2004,

p.12). This more holistic approach bore fruit in the form of Simon's outstandingly good achievements in education, which contradict the national performance indicators for the educational achievement of looked after children.

(In the conclusions, below, I make the point that I do not intend to imply that this finding is a "generalised assertion". It is based purely on the data captured through the interviews. It is important to acknowledge that Chris and Simon were two different young men, whose personalities and individual factors may have also affected the outcomes of their lives).

### ***Social research.***

#### **The cycle of deprivation.**

It is interesting to look at the examples of Chris' and Simon's vulnerable contexts and to compare their outcomes in terms of their achievements and the resulting scope of their life opportunities. As discussed above, Simon benefited from having very stable (and loving) foster placements from a very early age. Chris suffered from fragile and unstable family circumstances and subsequently unstable and fragmented foster placements. Simon went on to do very well at school, which earned him the offer of a University place. When I interviewed Chris he was struggling to rehabilitate himself after what had been a lifetime of crime, exclusions from school, imprisonment, a drinking problem and homelessness. A question arises from these findings:

*What was it that brought about two completely opposite sets of outcomes for two young men whose original personal circumstances had been so very similar?*



As a result of earlier readings in my second literature review, I had thought that the concept of “fatherlessness” or “absent fathers” might prove a useful strand for analysis in my conceptual framework. All of the offenders I interviewed in both research studies came from single parent families and I wondered if the background and circumstances of this single factor would prove significant for my research purposes. However, as I immersed myself in the literature, presented different points of view on the whole issue presented themselves:

- a) *“....possibilities.... appear to be emerging for new and different kinds of conversations about fathers” (Featherstone, 2003, p.1).*
- b) *“....fathers were consistently less likely to be seen as offering closeness, support and good role models than were mothers” (Featherstone, 2003, p.4).*

These comments were taken from a major research study conducted in 2000 that “opened up concerns about what is going on between fathers and children/young people” (Featherstone, 2003, p. 4). The researchers concluded that “there was work to be done to improve the quality of fatherhood for a substantial minority of children”. Whilst this is a valid conclusion from the data analysis, it did not give me a particularly clear lead for my own research purposes, especially in the light of the small numbers I was using for both research studies.

With regard to the above questions, I can draw on one line of discussion that, whilst it does not provide a definitive answer, makes a point for future consideration/research, within the social policy context. All of the young offenders (and their families) from both research studies presented several of the factors of

disadvantage that together constitute multi-deprivation (see Chapter 5). Without exception, their personal circumstances (and those at school) appeared to have conspired to constitute an *inevitability* about their futures: truancy, exclusion from school, crime and low achievement at school. The findings from my first research study show that where such a combination of disadvantages exists in a young person's home background it puts them at "high levels of risk and vulnerability that dramatically and adversely affect all the relationships within the family unit and appear inextricably linked to the inevitable negative outcomes in their personal development and achievement" (Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1). In this second research study, the analysis of Simon's interview transcript shows that his educational achievements resist the pattern illustrated in the national performance figures for looked after children and can be attributable (certainly in the greater part) to the high quality, holistic support he received from the different welfare agencies and the stability of his foster placement. On the other hand, Chris' level of achievement was at the opposite end of the achievement spectrum and no doubt due (also in greater part) to the chaos and deprivation that had been an enduring feature of his life. The "mantra of truancy, exclusion, and offending behaviour" (Hough, Wilson 2009, p.1) was avoided by Simon, but became inevitable for Chris. A major, differing factor between them was the stability and warmth of their personal, social and overall welfare care. When comparing the backgrounds of the two young men, for the purposes of this research project, it can be said that Chris' personal circumstances constitute a particular set of welfare needs, which includes socio-economic and mental health factors of disadvantage along with experience of (prison) incarceration. In his very early years, Simon had also experienced most of these factors of disadvantage (without

Chris' mental health difficulties) but they had endured for a very much shorter time than in Chris' case.

### **Foreword to conclusions.**

At this stage it is important to note that no generalised assertions are implied from this particular finding. The finding is a reflection of the analysis of data that relates to two young men whose original sets of personal circumstances were outwardly very similar. Therefore this interpretation of the finding acknowledges, but does not venture to explore specifically, the individual and unique factors that would have had a direct bearing on both Chris' and Simon's Chris' learning and development throughout their young lives. Such factors are those that relate to both young men's intrinsic personalities and states of psychological well being and would have also made a contribution to the different outcomes of their lives. In Chris' case, the factors associated with his ADHD condition would have no doubt connected closely to his fragile personal circumstances. The degree of vulnerability that defined his life could have been allied to the ways in which he responded (because of his ADHD condition) to what many of us would regard as day to day occurrences such as a lack of routine at home, changes in the dynamics of his personal/social relationships and being disciplined at school. Scientific research has very recently shown that ADHD can be directly linked to an individual's genetic make-up and can therefore be viewed as a "serious" disorder that affects all aspects of their lives :

"The first direct evidence of a genetic link to attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder has been found.... Scientists from Cardiff University, writing in The Lancet, said the disorder was a brain problem like autism - not due to bad parenting" (Dreaper, 2010). "They analysed stretches of DNA from 366

children who had been diagnosed with the disorder. But other experts argued ADHD was caused by a mixture of genetic and environmental factors.”

Whilst this most recent evidence about the genetic link to ADHD is still open to discussion, it is important to note that this research project acknowledges that such a (medical) condition may play a significant role in the eventual life chances and outcomes for those children and young people who have been diagnosed with ADHD.

This could mean that in the case of Chris, the task of adapting to the changes and circumstances of foster and social care was far more of a challenge for him (because of the individual factors of his physical and psychological make-up) than it had been for Simon.

## **Conclusions.**

1. Despite the early diagnosis of learning needs of children in schools, the resultant learning support does not necessarily guarantee a young person will achieve well at school or be able to construct good life opportunities in the long term. A diagnosis of need that is based mostly on performance data corresponds to the government’s evidence/output based approach to writing policies. The literature argues that evidence-based social policy that is grounded in quantitative and statistical data “conceals as much as it reveals” because such policies only measure the *intended* outcomes. The complexities surrounding welfare need give rise to many unintended outcomes, which cannot be measured. This is seen in the research data for Chris, for whom the “unintended outcomes” of his

learning support derived not only from his learning difficulties, but also his behavioural problems and his fragile home circumstances.

2. Holistic versus linear approaches to support. The research data from the transcript of the interview with Simon, a looked after young person, reveals that the
3. standard of his educational achievements is directly opposed to the pattern illustrated in national performance figures for looked after children. This very good outcome is attributable to the benefits that Simon enjoyed from valuable, additional support given to him by a teacher at school (in conjunction with consistent support from school and his social worker) who understood and empathised with the fact that he was a looked after young person. This teacher probably went beyond the “official” boundaries of a teacher’s job, but it was precisely this level of support and understanding that enabled Simon to achieve his best at school. As well as this, Simon had enjoyed very stable foster placements, experiencing just two sets of foster parents from when he was five years old and, similarly, had had the same social worker for almost all of the time he had been in care. In contrast, Chris talks about the absence of any sort of moral support or help from the teachers at his school and his level of achievement was at the opposite end of the spectrum in comparison with Simon’s. This opposing outcome was due no doubt to the chaos and deprivation that has been an enduring feature of Chris’ life. In Box 7.6 he says that having a stable social worker “instead of foster placements would have made it a hell of a lot easier. They changed them all the time....and changing where I was living” (Transcript, Chris p.6).

This is in direct contrast to the stability of foster and social care that Simon had enjoyed.

These conflicting sets of data for two young men whose original personal circumstances had been so very similar shows the importance of structuring support for vulnerable young people more holistically and with full regard to their overall social and personal context. Where this is the case, the support can then be sufficiently flexible to take account of both the intended *and* unintended consequences that arise due to a young person's fragile, difficult and changing personal circumstances.

4. This final conclusion is structured around a quotation taken from an interview with a senior health professional, conducted for this second research study. She talked about the need for prisons to structure a more holistic approach towards their provision for the welfare support and care of prisoners:

*"Sure Start to me is a philosophy, it's not a practice or process, it's a philosophy that should have been enhanced across the agencies".... with Sure Start, they..... put care plans in and it's the whole package".*

Interview transcript, SHP, p.7.

This "whole package" of support is what made such a difference to Simon's very good achievements, success in his personal life, success in his examinations and the offer of a University place. No single part of his welfare provision was considered in isolation. The opposite is the case for Chris, for whom there was little, or no, continuity, stability or integration in his welfare care provision.

**Finding 2: “The importance of the role of the Voluntary sector in supporting young offenders and their families”.**

**Box 7.8.**

*“There is a lack of appreciation of the family and this is essential to (prisoners’) rehabilitation. For example, the cost of making phone calls inside the prisons: the calls are on the highest tariff”.*

Transcript POPS, p. 7.

**CONFLICT  
S  
WITH**

**Box 7.9.**

*“Research has shown that family links are the most important to partners and mothers”.*

*“....there was some research done on this, funded by Northern Rock. The outcomes indicated the very high priority attached to nurturing and sustaining the lines of communication between prisoners and their families).*

Transcript POPS, p. 9

**CONFLICTS  
WITH**

**Box 7.10.**

*“There seem to be four parts to the Justice jig-saw. The two that are missing are the prisoners and the families”.*

Transcript POPS, p. 12

## **Findings supported by the research data.**

### **The ways in which the Voluntary sector supports families and prisoners.**

The comments in Boxes 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10 are those made by a group of mothers and partners of prisoners whom I interviewed for research study 2. I worked closely with a charitable organisation that was very supportive of my research work and who kindly facilitated the group interviews. The organisation, Partners of Prisoners (POPS) is happy for me to mention them by name in this thesis. Their role is to help guide families through the workings of the Criminal Justice System, liaising between families and offenders to ensure that families are able to support the offender effectively. Their Family Link Workers have been referred to as lifelines for families because they can often be their only means of learning about the prison regime and the well being of the offender (their son, husband or partner). From my analysis of the data from these interviews, what emerged very clearly was the significance to the families of the role played by POPS, often in conjunction with other welfare agencies. This is a significant finding from the research and contributes to a further understanding of the many complex aspects at play when considering welfare support as effective or ineffective.

### **Communication between prisons and families: Family Links.**

Boxes 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10 contain the responses of the mothers from POPS when we were discussing the extent to which, in their experiences, the prisons



concerned made efforts to involve the families in the care and rehabilitation of their sons and partners. In particular, the mothers felt unanimously that the prisons did not maintain good lines of communication with them over the health and welfare of their sons. As well as operational issues such as the expensive phone call tariffs in the prisons, mothers were concerned about the lack of information provided to them about of their sons' health and welfare needs:

*“My son had an ear operation (whilst in prison) and I wasn’t told anything about it. He had to ring me....he had been very ill but the prison didn’t communicate with me”.*

*Transcript POPS, p. 7.*

This was one of several examples the mothers gave of their concerns over the way the prisons dealt with their sons' welfare needs, such as health or education. The comments in Box 7.10 contain the perceptions of one of the mothers about the ways in which prisons do not involve families in the care and rehabilitation of young offenders. The “justice jig saw” she refers to comprises the prison service and the judiciary, but ignores two further vital pieces, the prisoners and their families. In Box 7.9 I cite a quote taken from one of the mothers who talks about some recent research findings (see next section) that show the importance of the family links in prisons to partners and mothers. This highlights a conflict perceived by the mothers, that there is very little involvement of families by the prison service in supporting young offenders in their rehabilitation, whilst recent research highlights the importance of family links (see below in Findings supported by the literature).

## **Rhetoric and reality: safeguarding in prison.**

In recent years it has been an expectation that prisons will allocate staff specifically to liaise with prisoners' families, to ensure flows of information and to help maintain family links. Whilst this may be the case in principle, the reality as perceived by the mothers I interviewed can be very different, see comments in Box 7.11. Here, one of the mothers is referring to what she sees as the inadequate replacement of the Family Links staff with the implementation of a prison's "safeguarding" function. (This function is an outcome of the Laming Report (Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government (2003b) which led to the government's Children Act of 2004, in which "under Section 13....each Local authority is required to set up a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in its area by 1 April 2006.... partners in LSCBs will include probation boards, YOTs, governors of prisons" (ECM Change for Children, 2004, p. 8). In Box 7.11, the mother talks about the disbanding of the Family Links teams in her son's prison and how, in her view, the safeguarding function is the rhetoric (paying "lip service to multi-agency working") that belies the reality. She sums this up in her final comment - "safeguarding is not just wet floors".

### **Box 7.11.**

**Mother 1:** *"The Family Forums are teams of people at the prisons; this is a token gesture – the prisons authorities don't engage. The Family Link Workers were funded by the YJB (Youth Justice Board). But this funding is no longer there because the prison service said the "safeguarding" function would take over from (the role played by) the Family Link Workers. Lip service is paid to multi agency working: you can't rehabilitate a dead child. Safeguarding is not just wet floors."*

Transcript POPS, p.6.

## **“Getting through the ordeal” of prison: the key role of Voluntary Sector.**

Just before I conducted the interviews with the mothers and partners at POPS's offices, we watched a promotional DVD that had been recently been produced to show the extent of the practical and emotional support the POPS workers provide to the wives and families of prisoners. When I originally interviewed one of the managers of the POPS, we discussed the range and nature of this support and one aspect struck me as particularly significant. The responsibility for assessing the extent of the vulnerability/welfare needs of the partners and families of prisoners sits with the welfare agencies within local authorities. However, these assessments are usually carried out *before* the effects of the imprisonment of a son or partner family have actually begun to tell on the wives/partners and their children. As they begin to acclimatise to the full impact of the incarceration of their husbands, sons and partners the true nature and extent of their own and the families' needs, anxieties and vulnerability tends to be revealed to the (voluntary) workers from POPS. This takes place during informal exchanges after or before prison visits, often over a cup of tea. It is with this intelligence that POPS is then able to refer the families on for fuller, more appropriate, support from the different welfare agencies, which meets their more specific needs. These needs often include issues to do with housing, benefits, assistance with funding for making the journeys for prison visits and a variety of incidental issues that arise for the family such as children's attendance at school, their behaviour in school, health needs etc. From watching the DVD and talking to the mothers and partners in interview, what was striking was their

dependence on POPS to help them “get through” the ordeal of supporting their son/partner whilst he was in prison.

This dependence on POPS is reflected in the comments contained in Box 7.13, in which the mothers talk about the ways in which POPS intervenes to help with difficulties arising from aspects such as the education provision inside prison and the bureaucracy and paper work associated with details such as temporary licences. The comment about POPS going “over the wall” refers to the ways in which the organisation supports families with internal issues, related to prison systems and provision for prisoners. POPS also provides support and help for families who use the prisons’ visitors’ centres, which are located outside but close to the prisons, which give families a place where they can meet one another and talk to POPS workers before and after a prison visit.

### **Conflicts between institutional support and the more holistic, welfare support provided by the voluntary sector.**

Box 7.12 contains examples of some of the difficult situations that arise in prisons with which POPS would be asked to assist, such as transference to other prisons and support with travel expenses; the comments made by the mothers serve to show the difference between what the prison service provides *institutionally* and what the voluntary organisation provides within an altogether more personal and holistic context (“I dread to think what it would be like without the voluntary sector...”). The systems within a large institution such as a prison will inevitably be prey to the type of hitches that are associated with bureaucratic administration. However, in the second example shown in Box 7.13, the transfer of the young offender to the wrong prison proved serious and had a markedly

negative effect on his self esteem, because his progression towards release was set back. On several occasions the mothers alluded to the difference between the accessible, sympathetic support of workers from POPS and the institutional approach of the prisons:

*“....because POPS care, empathise and the Prison Officers just tick the boxes and lock people up”. Transcript POPS p. 9.*

Whilst this perception is a personal and extreme interpretation of the differences in approach between prisons and POPS, it reveals how the nuanced institutional attitudes and behaviour of prison staff created unnecessary levels of anxiety for the offenders and their families. It also summarises the extent of the perceived differences between the working practice of the prison staff (peremptory “box tickers”) and the POPS workers, who were described as empathetic and approachable.

**Box 7.12.**

*"I dread to think what it would be like without the voluntary sector. Family Link workers have gone from many of the prisons and then nothing takes their place. They (POPS) are there for us".*

Transcript POPS, p. 12

*"POPS (workers) are based in prison and they "go over the wall". They provide excellent liaison regarding personal tutoring; release on temporary license and they enabled him [her son]) to sit his exams".*

Transcript POPS,p.8

CONFLICTS  
WITH

**Box 7.13.**

*"Also, there is no support for families such as paying expenses up front. There is no accessible framework for support [for] the poorer families".*

Transcript POPS, p. 7.

*"....he was transferred to the wrong prison – despite him being recommended for an Open Prison....[he has now been set back by some months]. This has affected the boy's attitude, he feels he's losing respect".*

Transcript POPS, p.8

## **Findings supported by the literature.**

### ***Critical Social Policy.***

#### **Devolving central state responsibility to local partnerships.**

The previous issue above, which was concerned with the differences between the “nuanced institutional attitudes and behaviour of prison staff” and those of the POPS workers, touches on the nature of the policy that underpins the government’s expectation of the voluntary sector, which is to fulfil an important role in enabling successful outcomes in youth justice:

*“....responsibility for law and order should be devolved from a central state to a series of semi-autonomous local partnerships....” (Clarke et al. 2000, p. 178). What is more, through the government’s insistence on a need to act “primarily on evidence-based research” (see above), its recommendations for this devolved, central responsibility take no account of the....transformative issues such as individual need, diagnosis, rehabilitation”, because they have tended to be....replaced, or subsumed within a range of ‘actuarial’ techniques of classification, risk assessment and resource management (ibid, p. 178).*

These comments provide a useful analysis that can be applied to the perceived differences (by the mothers and partners) of the approaches of the prison services and the voluntary workers at POPS. The prison staff (who “tick boxes and lock people up”) are adhering to their prescribed, centralised role, or the ‘actuarial techniques’ described above. On the other hand, the POPS workers are seen to fulfil a role that is far more sensitive and empathetic because they

deal with the more “transformative” issues of “individual need, diagnosis and rehabilitation”

### ***Social Research.***

#### **Unmet needs in the prison service.**

The common perception across the parents I interviewed is that there is very little involvement of families by the prison service in supporting young offenders in their rehabilitation. Conflicting with these perceptions are the findings from some recent, national research, which highlights in particular the importance of family links to the families of prisoners (this was actually referred to by one of the mothers during our interview). The following is taken from an evaluation of this piece of research, which was originally commissioned to look at what prisons in the North East of England were doing to support relationships between prisoners and their families:

*“..... provision for the families of prisoners and parents in prison remains poor in the region’s prisons and there continue to be significant gaps in provision” (Hartworth, 2007, p. 7).*

This research (undertaken in 2005) “examined how policy and practice supported these groups across the region” (ibid 2007, p.5). The findings showed that there were two unmet needs in the region’s prisons, one of which was “the needs of prisoners to access services and opportunities to help them maintain relationships with their families, particularly their children” (ibid, p.8). These issues resonate with several points raised in my discussions with the manager at POPS, prior to conducting the research interviews (see above, “Getting



through the Ordeal”). Box 7.14 contains a short description, taken from the resume of my meeting with the POPS manager, of the way POPS facilitates prison visits for the families and the care they take in providing an empathetic, calm environment that is sensitive to the emotional situations of parents and children.

**Box 7.14.**

*“The services of POPS are clearly much in demand by prisoners’ partners and families, evidenced by the density of calls received by the Helpline and the heavy demand for booking visits using the Visitors’ centres. Visitors’ Days are very special and POPS supports the partners and families of prisoners in coping with the potentially daunting atmosphere of a prison. The partnership with Sure Start helps to smooth the progress of children in adapting to the alien surroundings”.*

Resume POPS meeting, p. 3.

These comments reflect the unique contribution that a voluntary organisation is able to make to supporting the *holistic* social and welfare needs of the families concerned. This unique role is also alluded to in the research evaluation:

“The voluntary and community organisations are best placed to deliver services to families and prisoners....” (ibid, 2007, p.7). This refers to the ways in which voluntary organisations such as POPS work to take account of the personal situations and circumstances of the families of offenders, which was the second of the “unmet needs” (ibid. 2007, p.8) within the region’s prisons, that of “visiting families and children to have meaningful and stress-free opportunities to spend time with their family member (parent or partner) and to

receive support in the community” (ibid, p.8). We can see from Box 7.14 that this particular set of needs is met by POPS through its facility for booking the use of the Visitors’ Centres. Families’ needs are further supported through its 24 hour manned Helpline and the partnership with Sure Start:

*“POPS now works with Sure Start and they (Sure Start) have a lot of funding to help improve the prison visiting environment, although the prisons do provide toys and other amenities for the families and children. Some local Sure Start Centres have provided additional equipment, such as a wooden play kitchen and book packs in the visiting centres and Book-Start has gone into prisons too”. (POPS manager, Transcript, p.1 and feedback after proof reading analysis).*

### **Inconsistent funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).**

In the research evaluation discussed above (Hartworth 2007), the praise for and recommendation of the value of the voluntary sector comes with a caveat:

*““The statutory sector is not best placed to provide these services but the VCS (voluntary and community sector) is, and it has the will and ability to do so, with one important caveat. Although (it) has a champion in the form of the FSSP (Family and Social Support Pathway) and the ROM (Re-offender Management), it lacks the resources to be able to provide services in a coordinated and consistent fashion. It says a lot when XXXX (a local community-based charity) which provides most of the highly valued services to prisoners’ families in the region, cannot meaningfully engage with the FSSP work because they currently lack the funding for a coordinator”. (‘Hartworth, 2007, p.8).*

This statement serves to show the difficulties faced by POPS in particular and the voluntary sector in general, with regard to the lack of consistent funding and resources available to them. This reveals an important conflict that is contiguous with the issue discussed under the “Critical social research” section above. The policy of devolving centralized state responsibility for law and order through local partnerships was recommended through the Morgan Report (Great Britain. Home Office, 1991) on crime prevention. However, the very partnership bodies expected to provide this vital support are those such as POPS and others in the VCS, who (the research shows) lack *“the resources to be able to provide services in a coordinated and consistent fashion” (see above).*

## **Conclusions.**

1. The research data from this study reveals that the mothers and partners of offenders perceived very clear differences between the approach adopted by the prison services and that of the voluntary workers at POPS. They consider the approach of the prison staff to be typical of an institution, which renders them “box tickers”; they perceive that the workers from POPS fulfil a role that is far more sensitive and empathetic. Using the literature to interpret these experiences, the prison staff are seen to adhere to their prescribed, centralised role, or the ‘actuarial techniques’ discussed above (Clarke et al. 2000, p.178). On the other hand, the staff from a voluntary organisation such as POPS are seen to deal with the more “transformative” issues to do with “individual need, diagnosis and rehabilitation” (ibid. P. 178).

2. The research literature shows that there has been a marked “managerialistic” approach to welfare reform by successive governments over the last twenty years (Clark et al. 2000). This and the current Labour party’s preoccupation with devolving central state responsibility to local partnerships, gives rise to a situation that is problematic for welfare provision; social policy is urging voluntary organisations to fulfil an increasingly important role in the rehabilitation and support of offenders and their families, whilst providing no consistent, substantial funding for the resources to do so.

### **Finding 3: “Maslow revisited : skills for the “older young people’s” workforce and models of good practice.**

#### **Findings supported by the research data.**

##### **No advocate.**

Ben was a young offender, aged 17 years. The set of personal circumstances that had led to his offending reflect just how unexpectedly the factors of vulnerability can enter into someone’s life, through no fault of their own, and how heartbreaking the outcomes can be when there is no support available to help them to survive their difficulties. Whilst Ben’s experiences bear some resemblance to Chris’, his life circumstances up to 18 months or so before the time of his offence did not presage the inevitable sequence of truancy at school, exclusion and offending that characterises Chris’ young life. The factors that contributed to Ben’s offending were the result of a crisis in his personal life; the onset of depression. He struggled to make sense of this and his experience and perceptions at the time are shown in Box 7.15.

**Box 7.15.**

**Ben:** *"....I did do a lot of overtime but when you've got that much money and nothing to spend it on, it's good at first and I soon did realise that I wanted more, but at the same time, like I say, I was feeling depressed and I was drinking a lot. Because I didn't really want to say that I was feeling depressed, because I wasn't sure if I was depressed –...."*

*"- and I was really confused in my head as to what was wrong with me. But I think I was just suffering from low self esteem and like I say, you need to care about something to be able to change it. And at that point in time I didn't care. Some people would say that was selfish, but I don't see it as being selfish because I didn't care about myself. So I didn't care about anything or anybody".*

Transcript Ben, p.4.

Ben is a highly articulate young man and way he describes the onset of his depression is at the same time revealing and very poignant. Whilst he was aware of changes in his mental state he felt there was no one he could talk to about it. The way he describes his state at the time – *"I didn't really want to say that I was feeling depressed, because I wasn't sure if I was depressed –...."* implies that he felt he had no access to any kind of welfare support despite having a family and (presumably) being registered with a local GP. Circumstances had conspired to render him vulnerable, but because he was no longer at school, where there was an established framework of support available, Ben perceived himself as isolated in his vulnerability. He did not feel empowered to access help and support for himself. Because he had left school and had a job, outwardly he appeared well-balanced and not in need of specific

agency support. But because of a fragile home life (his mother had been the victim of domestic violence), when things began to deteriorate for him, he perceived an absence of any adult in his life who could to be an advocate for him. *"I think I was just suffering from low self esteem....at that point in time I didn't care"* Transcript Ben, p.4.

Unlike Chris, Ben was not in the care of a residential hostel, but there is a similarity in the pattern of events in their lives that led to their offending (for Chris, problems with behavioural issues, drinking and offending and for Ben, depression, heavy drinking and offending). Ben's comments about low self esteem give us an impression of his mental state at the time. What he says suggests that, like Chris, (see the Conclusions Foreword, at the end of the previous section, Finding 1) a set of individual factors may have conspired to give Ben a "predisposition" (or a mental health condition) that meant the maintenance of the routine of life was more of a struggle for Ben than for most other young people. This adds further significance to the absence of an advocate in his life to whom he could go for support. Ben pin points how the symptoms of depression created difficulties for him in achieving his aims in life: *"....when you've got that much money and nothing to spend it on, it's good at first and I soon did realise that I wanted more...."*

Here, Ben is not talking about wanting more money, he is referring to his longer term aspirations for his career and personal life and the frustration and confusion generated through his circumstances. Ben's perceptions reflect a quite different set of needs/aspirations when compared with those of a young offender, Darren, another young offender whom I had interviewed for the first research study (in 2007), who was in care in a residential home at the time.

Darren was 15 years old and in the transcript of his interview I made the following note:

*"In the residential care home Darren is secure and out of trouble, although he says he doesn't 'have a life.' [His Youth Offending Team case worker said that] he's done well, keeping all his appointments".* Transcript Darren, lines 127 – 133.

Darren went on to say:

*"YOT ain't really changed anything...made me look at things differently, but hasn't stopped my offending."* Transcript Darren, lines 94 - 96.

I compared the differences between each young man's perceptions of the welfare support they had/had not received and considered the potential significance of these differences. Ben was making every effort to take important decisions about his own life in order to restore his former independence and achieve his longer term aims in life. The younger boy, Darren spoke about the environment of his residential care home in terms of how he "didn't have a life" and how restricted his social life. However, in contrast with Ben, (see Box 7.17) Darren had not made any resolve to stop offending, nor had he yet been in a position to take any steps himself towards changing his way of life. He appeared to view his time in the home as a constraint to his immediate freedom, rather than anything more depreciatory. Seen together, the comments of these two young men reflect their different levels of needs, which inform and shape their different perceptions of their circumstances and environments in which they live.



The data from the research prompted me to consider an analysis of these young men's different levels of need within the context of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need.

## **Findings supported by the literature.**

### ***Social research.***

#### **The hierarchy of need according to Maslow.**

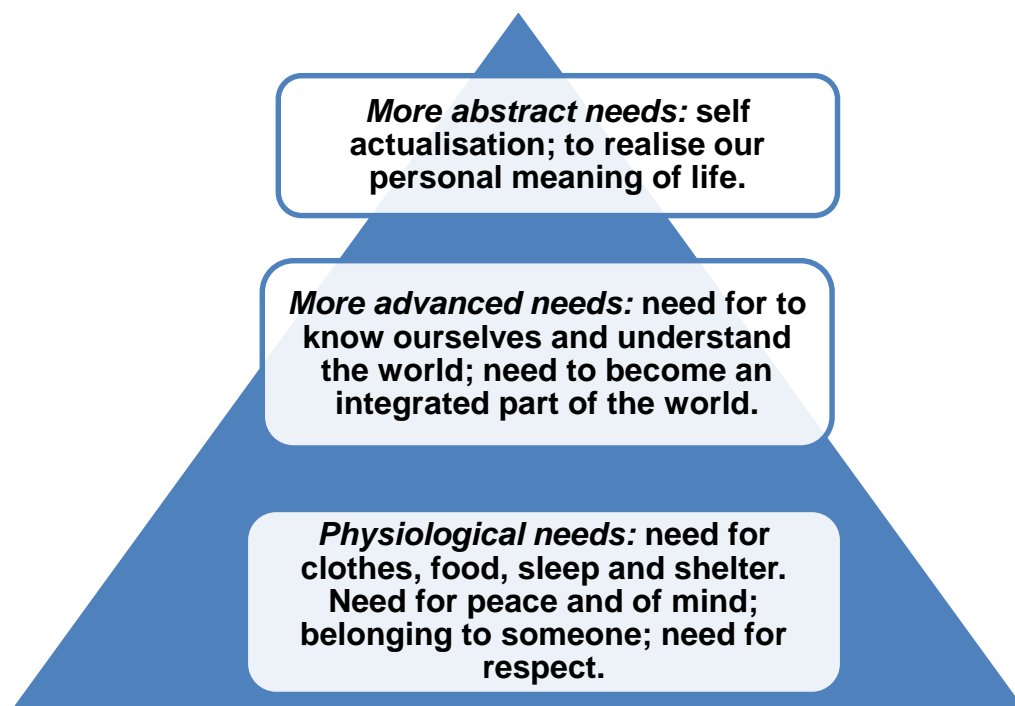
*"They say you treat them with respect and you'll get the same respect back, but they don't do they"? Transcript Chris, p.12.*

"As an American psychologist Abraham Maslow characterised the good life as a fulfilment of needs, which....(incorporates)...different ways of considering (the) quality of life...that have been eagerly used throughout history" (Ventegodt et al. 2003, p. 1051). These different tiers of need as analysed by Maslow are shown in Diagram 7.2, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (after Ventegodt et al. 2003)".

At the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy are those needs that constitute the most basic for human beings, the physiological needs: food, sleep, shelter, the need to belong and be respected. At the next level are the more advanced needs: developing knowledge and understanding; the need to know and understand yourself and the world. At the top are the most abstract needs, such as realising your own meaning to life and self actualisation. Maslow posited that each set of needs can only be met when those at the lower level are satisfied. His perspective implied that for human beings "happiness, health and ability to function come when you take responsibility for fulfilling all your needs" (ibid, p.

1051). The difficulty for people, according to Maslow, lies in our capacity to know ourselves well enough in order to understand the needs we *really* have.

**Diagram 7.2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (after Ventegodt et al. 2003).**



### **Identifying the different levels of need of children, young people and “older young people”.**

Using Maslow's hierarchy as an analytic tool with which to examine the needs of Chris, Ben and Darren presents a picture that reveals the different stages they were each at in their lives and their resultant needs at the time of interview.

Ben's life journey was different in comparison with Darren's. His (Ben's) aspirations/needs correspond to the “higher order” of Maslow's hierarchy of need and are located within both the “more advanced” and “most abstract” tiers,

as shown in Diagram 7.2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (after Ventegodt et al. 2003).

**Box 7.16.**

**Ben:** *"....the support services, they've been absolutely useless...."*

*"You can't rely on any one person to make a change in somebody else's life, but they're there to help and to push as much as they can to avoid – especially young people – from getting back into things.*

*"....for that offence – it should have been custodial because of my previous as well, but they took everything into account – my depression and everything – they put me on a 12 month rehabilitation order....the order would have been all well and good.... I've seen my YOT worker twice, three times (in ten months).... and that's only to say hello how are you. No rehabilitation has gone on whatsoever".*

Transcript Ben, p.9.

Since leaving school, Ben had achieved independence in his life and had a full time job that was well paid. However, after working for some eighteen months, his life took a dramatic downturn due to the onset of depression, which led to his drinking, which in turn exacerbated his descent into offending. In Box 7.16, Ben talks about his offence and how, with his previous record of arrests, it would normally have attracted a custodial sentence. However, the court took full account of his vulnerability, his depression and the drinking, and decided to award a 12 month rehabilitation order. Ben says:

*"this would have been well and good...I've seen my YOT (Youth*

*Offending Team) worker twice, three times (in ten months)”.*

This statement is a stark revelation about the failure of a welfare agency to support a vulnerable young adult at a time when he most needed help. It also highlights the extent to which the YOT did not, or could not take account (perhaps because of a lack of information) of the particular, individual factors of Ben’s psychological state that were associated with his depression. In other circumstances, a youth offending team would work with other relevant agencies and interventions to structure a support package to give a vulnerable young adult like Ben the best opportunity to rehabilitate his life. This is supported by the research findings from my first research study, in which reference is made to the importance of multi-agency working in supporting young offenders:

*“Information sharing has been there from very early days and the close working relationships have developed over time.....Since we’ve gone from a steering group to a youth crime management board chaired by the Director of Children’s Services DCoS) it has a much more multi agency feel to it”,* (Chapter 4, Box 4.19). Unfortunately for Ben, no such joined-up support was available to him to help him through his difficulties. In his first comment in Box 7.16, Ben says that the support services were, for him, “useless”. He qualifies this in his next comment about the rationale of the youth offending programme, where he talks about the way he thinks the programme should work if it is to achieve its aims: *“they’re there to help and to push as much as they can to avoid – especially young people – from getting back into things”*. These comments show that Ben understood his level of need very well and had a high level of understanding of the weaknesses in the YOT provision (from this personal experience) and was able to acknowledge the responsibility of the offender to play their part in the

process of rehabilitation. Such a balanced view reflects levels of knowledge and understanding about his personal situation that are located in the highest of Maslow's tiers, which correspond to the most abstract level of need, that of self actualisation. This is described in the literature thus: "it is about becoming real and present here and now and has nothing do to with becoming a self-satisfied....egoist" (Ventegodt et al. 2003, p.1054). Ben's comments in Box 7.17 exemplify this; he "bares his soul", admitting the effects of his offending behaviour on his close family, reflecting that his experiences have clearly given him a grasp of the "here and now" (ibid. p.1054).

**Box 7.17.**

**Ben:** *But that was the straw that broke the camel's back. There were a lot of petty things in between and a lot of things I've done I'm ashamed of, not only they're against the law, but pushing my girlfriend away and breaking her heart, my mum's heart, just everyone that loves me the most..... it made me realise I needed to change.*

Transcript Ben, p.7.

His final comment, "*....it made me realise I needed to change*", indicates that he has reached a moment of self-realisation, which corresponds with the higher levels in Maslow's hierarchy, "to realise our personal meaning in life" (Ventegodt et al.2003, p.1052).

In his interview with me Chris, like Ben, described the inadequacies of the welfare provision he received at the residential hostel where he was currently living:

*“....you get like hostels and things that are alright, but others – the scum who’s in there, you just don’t feel safe.... staff in some places don’t seem to care what happens in there, as long as they get their rent money. They’re supposed to support me and stuff and it doesn’t happen”, Transcript Chris, p.1.*

His comments about the other residents in the hostel are pejorative and yet, in common with one another, each young adult living there would have had to declare themselves homeless (including Chris), in order to be given a place in the hostel. Through his comments, Chris is dissociating himself from the profile that the hostel residents have in common. He talks about them with disdain, clearly not wanting to be identified with them. At the time of interview, he was making every effort to acquire any qualifications he could in order to find a job and was very close to coming off probation (for the first time in 10 years). The extent of his own determination to change the course of his life could have made him particularly sensitive to being identified with the other residents, who may well have been far less motivated to improve their situations. His comments also reflect the extent to which he, similarly to Ben, considered the agency that should have been providing him with support and guidance (the staff in his hostel) was in reality unsupportive and uncaring; his perception was that staff engaged with their role at only a superficial level (*“...don’t seem to care....as long as they get their rent money”*).

**Box 7.18.**

**Chris:** *"....when you have a relapse, you've had a relapse – it's not because you wanted to. The [hostel staff] expect you to be there all the time they're not very caring..."*

Transcript Chris, p.2.

In Box 7.18, Chris is speaking from a viewpoint that, again, has similarities with Ben's. It indicates that Chris is developing an insight into the complex issues connected with relapses into crime, *"when you have a relapse, you've had a relapse - it's not because you wanted to"*, which show that he is beginning to know and explain himself (and his weaknesses) and develop an understanding of his own world in relation to the world at large. These comments also, in common with Ben, reflect a level of needs that are located within the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy – understanding his world and the "logic" (Venegodt et al. 2003, p. 1054) of his own life.

In contrast with Ben and Chris, Darren (a respondent from my first research study who was aged fifteen years at the time of interview), had aspirations that were pitched within the lower tier of the hierarchy. He had yet to reach any resolve towards ending his offending behaviour and viewed his time in the home as a simple constraint to his personal freedom (*"YOT ain't really changed anything... but hasn't stopped my offending"* (see above).

Table 7.5, Darren and Ben, a needs analysis using Maslow, illustrates their two contrasting sets of needs in a table format and how the young men's levels of vulnerability relate to Maslow's hierarchy. We can see from Darren's comments that his concerns are of an immediate, day-to-day nature – corresponding to the

more basic needs. He refers to his time in care from the point of view of the constraints to his freedom, rather than from an understanding of the corrective purpose of being on licence/tagged and placed within the Youth Justice programme pending a criminal sentence. On the other hand, Ben's comments are far more reflective and show his remorse for his offences and the way his life has gone since his depression.

The perceptions and experiences of Chris and Ben give us a clear insight into the complex issues that they have begun to come to terms with.

Ben: *"there were a lot of petty things in between and a lot of things I've done I'm ashamed of"* (Box 7.19).

Chris: *"I've like been in foster care and in secure units. Now I look back on my criminal record that's 13 pages long, I feel disgusted with myself"*. Transcript Chris p.8.

This evidence shows that both young men are beginning to know and explain themselves (and their weaknesses) and develop an understanding of their own worlds in relation to the world at large. Both are struggling to put themselves in a more secure position in order to begin the process of applying for jobs (Ben's long term aim, he told me, is to join the army; Chris is planning to go to College) and move towards independence. Each of them is talking in terms of the higher tier of Maslow's needs, knowing themselves and beginning to realize the personal meanings of their lives.



**Table 7.5: Darren and Ben, a needs analysis using Maslow.**

	Darren	Ben
<p><b><u>Most basic needs:</u></b></p> <p>Need for peace of mind – a safe residence; need for food and clothes; a need to be acknowledged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"In the residential care home Darren is secure and out of trouble, although he says he doesn't "have a life."</i></li> <li>• <i>"YOT ain't really changed anything...made me look at things differently, but hasn't stopped my offending."</i></li> <li>• <i>"I'm in here, I ain't got no mates and I got no social life"...</i></li> <li>• <i>"Whilst I'm in here I go out to do my programme, come back and sit and watch the telly"</i></li> </ul> <p>Transcript Darren, p.7)</p>	

<p><b><u>More advanced and most abstract needs:</u></b></p> <p>Need to know ourselves; need to realise our personal meaning of life; need for self actualisation.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“the support services were useless”....they’re there to help and to push as much as they can to avoid – especially young people – from getting back into things” [trouble].</i></li> <li>• <i>“they put me on a 12 month rehabilitation order.... I’ve seen my YOT worker twice, three times (in ten months).... and that’s only to say hello how are you. No rehabilitation has gone on whatsoever”.</i></li> <li>• <i>“But that was the straw that broke the camel’s back. There were a lot of petty things in between and a lot of things I’ve done I’m ashamed of..... it made me realise I needed to change”.</i></li> <li>• <i>“...[the armed forces ]....I know [...] would be beneficial for me. The discipline, opportunities, travel, good pension....lots of skills, lots of opportunity...”</i></li> </ul> <p>(Transcript Ben, p.10</p>
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From the evidence shown in Table 7.5, Darren’s needs are clearly located within the lower tier of Maslow’s hierarchy and his comments mostly refer to safety, and his more immediate, day-to-day needs. In contrast, Ben talks at length

about his regrets for his mistakes and offences and also his longer term, career aspirations

### ***The political context.***

## **Two models of good practice.**

### **(1) “Serendipity”: the Scafell Project.**

Chris revealed to me, during our interview, that the probation officer, who was giving him some very good support in his attempts to move out of the hostel, was attached to the Scafell Project rehabilitation programme (see Section 6.7). This was an unexpected coincidence, because whilst preparing to commence this second research study, in the middle of 2008 I had made contact with professionals working for the project, with a view to working with them and arranging interviews with the offenders they were supporting. (I discuss this in detail in Section 6.7.1). In its current form the Scafell Project is a multi agency team that delivers intensive monitoring, support to and supervision of prolific offenders. It was fortuitous for me that Chris had experience of the Project because it gave me the opportunity to ask him for his perceptions of the support offered by the Assertive Outreach Workers. This was important because, despite our best efforts, the Scafell professionals and I had been unable to arrange any interviews, earlier in the year, with the offenders in their care (see Section 6.8).

### **Assertive Outreach Workers.**

My initial interest in the Scafell Project stemmed from the similarities between the role defined for its assertive outreach workers, and the aims and recommendations contained within the Every Child/Youth Matters policies that

espouse the integration of the welfare services (into a multi-agency way of working). I initially interviewed two managers from the Project and asked them what they considered to be the most significant aspects about their roles that contributed to the success of the Project (within six months of its inception, the re-offending numbers were reduced by 72% in the county).

The factors they considered to be the most significant were:

1. The role of the Assertive Outreach Workers (AOW's) was highly significant to the offenders in terms of supporting them in their communications with different agencies/ bureaucracy; "building trust is the big thing and it takes time".
2. The AOW's have a high level of discretion as case workers. If offenders compromise the support and help they receive (through behaviour that is indicative of re-offending), the AOW's are empowered to revoke their licences, the terms of which bind the offenders whilst they are on release from prison.

In the light of my earlier discussions around Finding 3, I was inspired to analyse the above success factors within the context of Maslow's hierarchy of need. The offenders in the care of the AOW's tend to be "hard core" and "disengaged", mostly as a direct result of their addiction to "drugs, alcohol or gambling " (all quotes with speech marks are taken from the transcripts of my interviews with managers in the Scafell Project). Offenders out on licence will often be struggling to stay clear from drugs, so at one level (despite their age) their needs are allied to those at the most basic level in Maslow's hierarchy (physiological), which we would normally associate with children. At another level some of the offenders are striving, like Chris, to stay out of prison

permanently by not re-offending, which means they are aspiring to longer-term goals and acknowledging needs that relate to their sense of self worth and realising their potential; needs that are located at Maslow's higher levels. Because the AOW's have a high degree of discretion over the terms of offenders' licences, clients /offenders are aware they are always at risk of being moved to the status of "catch-and-convict" from that of "rehabilitate and resettle", which means an immediate return to prison. The level of this risk depends on the extent to which offenders co-operate within the terms and conditions of their licence.

It is important to mention here that notwithstanding the success rate of the Scafell Project, many offenders on the scheme fail to sustain their engagement with these terms and conditions, despite the best efforts of the AOW's. For these offenders, sometimes agreeing to the terms and conditions is a step too far in terms of coping with the issues that drive their personal needs and goals. This can be seen as symptomatic of their backgrounds ("hard core" and "disengaged") and, in terms of Maslow, constitutes an example of their most basic needs overriding all others.

The AOW's have access to the offenders' confidential medical information and direct access to their GP. This critical safeguarding function keeps the Scafell support team informed about both the physical and mental health needs of the offenders. The AOW's regard the development of an empathetic relationship with the offenders as a priority, which enables them to build up trust *"and this is difficult sometimes. "Unless you spend time with people you won't know what their problems are.... if they actually say "thank you" you can't measure the value and depth of meaning in their thanks"* (Interview transcript 1, Scafell

Project p. 1). The comments in Box 7.19 show how highly Chris valued the intervention of his probation officer and the way the Scafell team organised further support for him through sourcing help and support for his immediate and longer term needs. The team helped to provide Chris with a holistic “package” of support that provided him with a roof over his head and support for his more complex needs, such as combating his addiction and the process of seeking employment and training. In fact it was his probation officer at Scafell who introduced him to the local support agency, LSA, (next section) that worked with Chris in directing him towards training that would help him to find a job.

**Box 7.19.**

**Chris:** “[Scafell] help[ed] me get, like, employment.... accommodation. When I came out of prison I had nowhere and they got me into (the hostel) and they helped me to get off drink – alcoholic support, with the ADAS. Everything really, they just pushed me to get what I want.

Transcript Chris, p. 11.

## **(2) The local support agency, LSA.**

Whilst I was arranging the interviews for this study I was put in touch with a support agency (called for purposes of this research, LSA) that helps young and older offenders to rehabilitate their lives and provides a wide ranging package of support for young people particularly at those times when they are vulnerable. My interviews with Ben, Chris and Aiden were arranged through the manager at LSA and it was through this contact that I became aware of the highly effective

welfare provision LSA makes to the lives of young people, and “older young people” who are aged over 19 years. LSA operates within a truly multi-agency framework. Ben was recommended to them through his housing support worker and Aiden and Chris had both been introduced to LSA through other agencies (in Chris’ case, the probation worker from the Scafell project). The help and support LSA offers is in providing young people (male and female, aged 14 – 25 years) with personal skills and attributes that will enable them to make progress towards re-entering education, to access further training, gain employment and move forward with their lives. LSA is a charity/not-for-profit organisation. It receives funding from a national public body that sponsored by the government and is committed to the improvement of the further education and training sector, to raise standards and to make learning provision more responsive to the needs of individuals and employers. Without exception, the young men I interviewed were immensely grateful to LSA for the sympathetic support provided and commented particularly on the understanding and non-judgemental approach that characterised the way the manager and other workers in the organisation dealt with them. Box 7.20 contains some of the very positive comments made by the young men about the ways in which LSA had supported them.

**Box 7.20.**

**Q:** *What is it about this that's different?*

**Aiden:** *Whenever there's like people here, it's only ever 1 to 1 or there's like, literally only a couple of us".*

*"And Jackie has a proper understanding as well, she's not like....because she's had it done to her.*

**Q:** *She doesn't judge perhaps?*

**Aiden:** *Yeah, she doesn't judge you like, wearing the clothes that I wear – a lot of people just look at you and say – do you know what I mean?*

Transcript Aiden, p. 7.

**Ben:** *Jackie, she was good .... we realised that not all people are just badly behaved but some people learn in different ways. And I think when they took us out, when I did snow boarding and stuff like that, whereas at the time you don't realise what you're learning....it's just a bit of fun but you learn so much more – team building, confidence... I'm making the most of every opportunity I get. But yes, I think they're fantastic at what they do.*

Transcript Ben, p. 3.

In common with the Scafell Project, the workers from LSA take the time to build relationships with the young men and women they support. This is reflected in the comments shown in Box 7.20, which highlight the range of experiences they have with LSA and the fact that the manager was able to give them one-to-one support. LSA facilitated opportunities for activities that some of them had never had before, such as a trip abroad, rock climbing and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Aiden's comments show very clearly how much easier he found it to relate to the staff at LSA than to teachers in school. The most significantly



positive aspects of LSA for him were the respect shown him by LSA staff and the absence of a judgemental attitude towards him.

### **The heart of good practice.**

The data shows that the support supplied by the Scafell Project and LSA are examples of good practice that contrast with the lack of support and empathy that /Chris and Ben associated with their previous experiences of welfare agencies.

**Table 7.6. Supporting vulnerable young adults: the key elements of good practice.**

	<b>Key elements of support from Scafell Project team</b>	<b>Key elements of support from LSA</b>
<b>Needs of offenders</b>		
<b>Basic physiological:</b> safety, clothing, money; respect.	<p>1. Because they work with a high degree of discretion, the AOW*s are empowered to revoke offenders' licences and send them back to prison. Therefore the boundaries of their role are very clear.</p> <p>2. AOW's provide offenders with almost 24/7</p>	<p>1. LSA's support and resources represent a second chance in life to many vulnerable "older young people".</p> <p>2. Communications with young people are on a one to one basis.</p>

	<p>monitoring and support. This is a preventative rather than punitive approach.</p> <p>*(AOW: Assertive Outreach Worker)</p>	<p>3. There is an absence of “officialdom”.</p>
<p><b>More advanced/abstract:</b> self worth, realisation of potential and self actualisation.</p>	<p>3. The project works with an embedded multi agency approach that permits effective sharing of information on a need to know basis (critical safeguarding function).</p> <p>4. AOW’s are empathetic towards offenders regardless of the seriousness of their offences.</p> <p>5. The team take time to build trust in relationships with offenders.</p> <p>6. The team provides support to families and partners, which encourages the</p> <p>7. of local ‘intelligence’ to AOW regarding potential</p>	<p>4. LSA operates an established multi-agency approach, for example sharing information with housing support workers.</p> <p>5. There is a non-judgemental approach prevalent towards all young people. Learning needs are dealt with pragmatically.</p> <p>6. LSA offer young people opportunities to participate in activities they have never experienced before. If their behaviour is inappropriate, they</p>

	criminal activities. This is turn supports point 1, above.	are withdrawn from the activities.
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In Table 7.6: Supporting vulnerable young adults: the key elements of good practice, the most significant elements of (good) practice across both Scafell and LSA are mapped against the relevant tier of need within Maslow's hierarchy. The elements apparent in both models of welfare support are similar and illustrate some significant factors that, according to the research data, are missing from support given (or not) through the universal welfare agencies. In Table 7.6 I draw on the discussions in the previous section to illustrate the key elements within both the Scafell Project and LSA, which together constitute this overall model of good practice. The elements in common to both models are highlighted next, in the Conclusions.

## Conclusions.

From the above analyses and discussion of Finding 3, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. Where the care of vulnerable “older young people” is ineffective, it can have a pronounced negative impact on their *higher level needs*, such as self worth, realising their potential and self actualisation. Existing government policy prescribes six core areas of skills and knowledge for the workforce that cares for children and young people, in the document Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce (Great Britain. DfES, 2005c). Whilst each of these aspects is explored in some detail, the main tenor of the contents is one of prescription and it urges the workforce to “know about”, “understand” and “provide” when outlining the skills and knowledge necessary for the workforce. It is written for a workforce that specifically works with children and young people, not for those who work with “older young people” or vulnerable young adults (such as Chris and Ben). What is missing from this particular core of skills and knowledge is any reference to those skills, values and capacities that go beyond simply “providing” and “knowing” and “understanding”. These types of skills could be incorporated through an acknowledgement of the importance of the need for a ‘higher order’ level of skills and values, defined as being able to consult and advise young adults on developing their higher levels of need (such as personal goals and longer term aspirations, their sense of worth). If staff were urged to instil their role with a more vicarious approach to their work, this might encourage them to engage more actively with vulnerable

young adults and to become more aware of their higher levels of need (becoming independent and giving a meaning to their lives).

2. For those vulnerable, older young people (such as Ben) aged 17 years and above, there is often an absence of an adult who can advocate for them, particularly when they have fragile, or chaotic, family circumstances. This was a crucial issue for Ben, whose circumstances were relatively secure before the onset of his depression. For Ben, Chris and Aiden, (the third respondent) the only place where they found advocacy and meaningful support was through the Scafell Project and LSA, two support agencies whose rationales (and funding in the case of LSA) were quite distinct from the existing universal welfare agencies provided by the local authority.
3. The Scafell Project and LSA each provided a model of good practice in supporting, nurturing and advocating for young, vulnerable adults in their higher levels of need. The key elements common to both models of good practice include:
  - a) Established/embedded multi agency working, which functions as a *matter of course* in both projects and is not imposed or espoused through government policy.
  - b) The support structures of both models are carefully shaped to present a total absence of officialdom (ie a non-threatening environment) to the offenders and young adults.
  - c) The underlying philosophy of both models of practice derives from a non-judgemental approach. However, each model has clearly drawn boundaries that ensure that “relapses” result in the withdrawal of

freedom for offenders (Scafell) or opportunities to take part in new activities (LSA).

d) The relationships established between the professionals and offenders/young adults in each model are based on trust and an empathetic yet pragmatic approach.

Several of these elements of good practice correspond to the discussion of “higher order skills” for a young adults’ workforce in Conclusions point 1, above.

#### **Finding 4: “Addressing welfare problems that are the outcomes of a ‘patriarchal society’”.**

**Findings supported by the research data.**

**How agencies can undermine the aims of Every Child/Youth Matters.**

***Box 7.21.***

***Michelle:*** “My son committed his first offence aged 18 years. His macho, violent behaviour was encouraged at school – he was a good rugby player...and the school wanted him for his size and physical attitude..  
...this was a crap role model. The ethos and values of violence were supported by the school....this attitude of violence got him into trouble”.

Transcript POPS, p.6.

Michelle was one of the mothers I interviewed and her comments in Box 7.21 highlight a significant issue that links with the previous three findings and has direct bearings on the five outcomes of the ECM programme.

In her comments, Michelle explains her concerns about the quality of the educational provision that her son received from his school. Her son Michael's circumstances did not constitute an obvious example of vulnerability (unlike those of Chris and Darren). He was clever, a good sportsman and came from a loving, caring family. The factors that contributed to his offending were more subtle and therefore more difficult to identify than those that might relate to neglect or abuse. It was the school's ethos and values, (which, according to Michelle, constituted a "crap role model") that encouraged and instilled in Michael a predisposition to adopt a confrontational attitude when faced with difficult situations, both inside and outside school. The school, through its ethos, was seen by Michelle (and, latterly her son) to value aggression as a response to difficult situations, which emanated directly from the value the school placed on the physical, attacking skills of its rugby teams. This "macho" attitude, according to Michelle, ultimately led to his offending and subsequent prison sentence. As an outcome of the data analysis, this example could in no way be applied to any sort of generalisation (such as "all rugby players are in danger of committing a criminal offence"), because it reflects a set of purely personal experiences and perceptions. However, the other mothers present at the interview contributed similar examples from their own sons' lives in school, which resonated with Michelle's personal experience and perceptions,:

*"Teachers never sorted anything out. They always saw Aaron as hitting that person, they never seen the bullying back again".*

*“The only time I saw the headmistress in that school in the whole time he was in that school was the day they expelled him – permanently”.* Transcript, Jan, POPS, p.4.

The above comments are those of Jan, another mother who, from her own experiences, felt the ethos and values of the school were characterised by a very top down, traditional form of discipline and a head teacher who played only a distant part in the day to day provision of care and teaching. From her point of view, the teachers were not empathetic in their dealings with students, which she perceived in the one-sided approach they took towards the students who bullied her son. Consequently, she felt her son had been let down badly by the school. (Each of the parents and partners I interviewed reported that their sons/partners had been bullied at school). In common with Michelle, this mother was saying that her son had attended a school where, if the “ethos and values of violence” were not explicitly supported by the school, the outcomes (exclusion, fighting and offending) were similar. With regard to these comments made by Michelle it is important here to acknowledge that for this research study there is an absence of data that reflects the educational standpoint of teachers and managers in schools. This was not intentional on my part; the list of interview respondents (shown in Table 6.2) was limited to those interviews I was able to arrange, through the contacts I had and within the time frame to which I was working. The omission of data from this particular group is unfortunate, because interviews with teachers and managers in schools would have provided me with data that reflected their personal “experiences and perceptions of issues such as vulnerability, support, deprivation and achievement” (Section 6.5, “A new theoretical framework”). Data captured from this group would have



provided me with a useful, alternative perspective on the issues Michelle raised in her perception of the ethos of her son's school, which she felt had ultimately been responsible for damaging his life chance: "*We live in a patriarchal society that is damaging (to our sons) (Box 7.22).*"

Michelle's comments serve to show the ways in which it is possible for an agency, such as a school, to perhaps unwittingly contribute to fostering the sort of environment in which a minority of children and young people are in real danger of falling into the trap of offending behaviour. These outcomes present the welfare agencies at large with a particular set of problems. The schools discussed in the above examples were not deliberately setting up the young people for failure. However their prevailing systems and values evidenced the more traditional, patriarchal style of leadership and management associated with a past age, when corporal punishment and enforced discipline were the norm. In Michael's school, this approach may have been intentional and part of a strategy; to deal swiftly with potentially threatening situations in the classroom and to manage those students whose behaviour was challenging and a threat to others. From one perspective this can be seen as understandable, but from the standpoint of Every Child/Youth Matters, it is the antithesis of the aims enshrined within its programme for change.

## A 21<sup>st</sup> Century patriarchal society?

(Patriarchal - *“relating to or characteristic of a culture in which men are the most powerful members”*).

**Oxford English Dictionary**

### **Box 7.22.**

**Michelle:** *“We live in a patriarchal society that is damaging (to our sons). At school there were never enough people to go and talk to; no communications with parents. If school rewards this kind of thing (seeking help and support) then doing it would be positive. But they don’t.*

*Transcript POPS, p. 11.*

Michelle’s comments in Box 7.22 are revealing about the ways in which the culture of her son’s school, and of the other schools discussed during the POPS interviews, actually presented a barrier (to pupils) to securing the successful outcomes of the ECM/YM programme. These barriers are presented in more detail in Table 7.7: patriarchy and the five ECM outcomes.

**Table 7.7: Patriarchy and the five ECM outcomes.**

<b>ECM outcome</b>	<b>Factors of failure</b>
<b>Staying safe (ECM outcome 1).</b>  <b>Staying healthy (ECM outcome 2).</b>	<p>These were not successful outcomes, particularly for Michael, in whom the school had instilled an aggressive, confrontational attitude that caused him to offend, resulting in a prison sentence.</p> <p>The outcomes reported by Jan showed how her son received no support for his being bullied or for his learning difficulties and which led to truancy, exclusion, offending and prison.</p>
<b>Enjoying and achieving at school and in their lives (ECM outcome 3).</b>	<p>This was not a successful outcome for any of the sons or partners concerned with this research. For some, their educational achievements had been poor because of their schools' inflexible, traditional approach to discipline, learning needs and personal development and well-being. Most were attempting to catch up through the educational provision in prison. In Michael's case, a potentially successful career progression (perhaps to University) had been interrupted by a prison sentence.</p> <p>All mothers reported how poor the schools were at communicating with families.</p>
<b>Making a positive contribution (ECM outcome 4).</b>  <b>Making a positive economic contribution (ECM outcome 5).</b>	<p>These two outcomes are currently impossible for each of the young people/adults concerned with the research study, because of their current imprisonment, or their previous prison sentences. After release, they face the challenges of rehabilitation and (re)gaining their independence.</p>

In Box 7.22 Michelle talks about the way in which her son's school failed to encourage students to seek help and their lack of communication with parents. These two issues are at the heart of the Children Act of 2004 and the aims of the ECM programme. The importance of the student voice and the involvement of parents/carers in their children's learning are both highlighted in government documentation (Great Britain. DfES 2004a, p. 36; Great Britain. Her Majesty's Government 2003c, p.23). From her experience, her son's personal development and well-being had been mis-managed by the school. This particular finding has direct implications for the providers of training and development to welfare workforces, with specific reference to how professional *attitudes* are cultivated and taught, alongside the practical skills and competences of professional practice. In the case of the schools concerned in the above examples, it would appear that leadership and management were not ensuring that provision was aligned with the aims of ECM, with the result that a significant minority of their students were failing to achieve the outcomes. This minority of students (the sons who were in prison at the time of interview) had endured circumstances of vulnerability in their school lives, but rather than support them, the schools appeared to have no structures in place that would encourage the boys or the parents to seek help. How does this happen within a major welfare agency? This highlights the need for training providers to consider how to develop strategies and training programmes that address the tacit norms and underlying professional values that prevail beneath and within the systems and structures of the different agencies (schools and the other welfare services). This issue is connected with aspects of Finding 3, "Maslow revisited" that suggest a need for *higher order* skills and competences to be a

requirement from the workforces, to ensure staff can support young adults/older young people in developing their higher levels of need, (such as self realisation and longer term aspirations). These very skills would appear to be absent within the leadership and the teaching staff at the schools attended by the sons of the POPS respondents, which raises the importance of challenging the givens of professional practice across the welfare agencies wherein the ‘target-setting’ culture, so favoured by the government’s social policies, is in danger of ensuring “compliance with at least minimal standards. Is this good enough”? (Hough 2009, p.73).

Further data from the interviews for this research study support Michelle’s comments about the influence of a “patriarchal society”.

**Box 7.23.**

**SHP:** *I always felt with the directives that came down from the government – I know we’ve got to have parameters and barriers and some of the documents were very good - but what I found with the recent government documents, they were dictatorial and they were authoritarian....people lost their professional identity, their reasoning, their decision-making and their natural intuition through their professional experience of what’s gone before.*

Transcript, Gerry, p.7.

The comments in Box 7.23 were made by Gerry, a senior health professional I interviewed, and reflect her perceptions of the content and nature of the

government's policy documentation within her particular welfare agency of the National Health Service. Her use of the words "dictatorial" and "authoritarian" imply that the tone and nature of the documentation is prescriptive and its implementation subject to a tight, centralised form of control. These perceptions are similar to Michelle's (and her son's) of education provision. Michelle sees the outcomes of a patriarchal society as negative and as actively discouraging young people to seek support and help; Gerry also perceives the outcomes of the government's prescriptive policies as negative, because they appear to drain welfare professionals of their initiative and capacity to exert their professional authority. This could go some way to explaining one of the causes for the implementation of the more traditional strategies and narrow forms of discipline in the schools discussed above. In the light of the pressure on schools to hit targets for educational performance, the leadership in these instances resorted to a hard line, old fashioned "patriarchal" form of leadership that would achieve its aim (improved school performance) through the removal of the more challenging students.

### **Findings supported by the literature.**

### ***Critical social policy.***

## **Linking the findings of Research Studies 1 and 2.**

The following quote is taken from a White Paper published by the Cabinet Office in 1999, entitled Modernising Government:

*“An increasing separation between policy and delivery has acted as a barrier to involving, in policy-making, those people who are responsible for delivering on the front line....”* (Clarke et al. 2000, p.52).

This criticism of the lack of joined-up government at both policy and management levels and of the “fragmenting effects of managerialism” (ibid, p.52) could be said to be as valid now as it was in 2000, with specific regard to the government’s approach to social policy-making. Some of the difficulties of joining up social policies (such as those that underpin the ECM programme) with practice across the different welfare agencies emerged in the findings from my first research study (see Chapter 4). These findings are reproduced in a brief form here:

1. the inadequacy of quantitative national performance indicators in identifying hard-to-reach groups of children, young people and their families who experience a range of factors that render them vulnerable, but who do not “score” sufficient numbers of indicators to trigger welfare support;
2. targeted support for the most vulnerable children, young people and families shows evidence of effective integrated services, early

intervention and the monitoring of the circumstances that might make them more vulnerable. Is there equally effective support available through the universal (day to day) welfare provision for those children and young people who, whilst not identified as vulnerable, may become so due to their changing circumstances?

3. it is the *localised* nature of multi agency teams that is a major factor in the effectiveness of how they use information and that obviates the need for communicating through a time-consuming , “arms length” chain of command.

This first set of findings gives an idea of the range of difficulties that confront front line welfare professionals in their task of implementing the *espoused* aims of the social policies underpinning the ECM programme (integrating the welfare services and bridging the achievement gap across the socio-economic spectrum and vulnerability).

The second finding from this second research study, “The significance of the voluntary sector...” (Chapter 7) led to discussions about the high level of expectation the government now has of the voluntary sector, which is reflected in its social policies that devolve “central state responsibility to local partnerships” (Chapter 2, Finding 2, Conclusion 2). “Whilst the discourse of partnership....signifies equality of power, shared values and the establishment of common agendas and goals, the reality tends to be very different .... the discourse itself serves to create *illusory unity* which masks the need to engage with the gritty political realities of divergent and conflicting goals” (Clarke et al. 2000, p.54). This endorses the issue from Finding 2 of this second research study; that whilst being urged to work in partnership with the welfare agencies in



order to provide services “in a consistent and coordinated fashion” (Hartworth, 2007,p.8), there is a distinct lack of resources available to enable the voluntary sector to do so. It also begins to explain issues that lie at the heart of the differences between the aims and philosophies of the VCS and the aims of government policies.

### **Social policies: their incompatibility with professional identity and the ethos of the voluntary sector.**

Whilst aiming to devolve state involvement in welfare provision through local partnerships, government policies still retain their focus (a) on reducing costs and (b) measuring success through performance targets (see Finding 1 from the first research study). Such aims are at odds with the roles and aims of POPS, which, as a voluntary organisation is committed to providing practical and emotional support for those in need and whose workers are characterised by their empathetic approach to the wives and partners in helping them to “get through” the ordeal of supporting their son/partner whilst he is in prison. This conflict in thinking between government policy and voluntary organisations such as POPS has been described as the “tension between the economic and social goals [of Labour]....” and that “....collaboration between providers around client needs in social care is not compatible with....output based performance indicators” (Clarke et al p.55). Through the government’s focus on achieving value for money through the framework of “evidence based approaches” (such as the output based indicators referred to earlier) it is ignoring, or not taking account of, the true purpose and aims of voluntary organisations, whose aims

run counter to this quantitative mechanistic approach. A similar degree of incompatibility, existing between government policies and the professional goals of welfare professionals is evidenced in Gerry's comments (Box 7.23):

*"....people lost their professional identity, their reasoning, their decision-making and their natural intuition....".*

From her perspective she has experienced the government's "patriarchal approach" through the way it "pushes through" policies in order to produce the "right" results in terms of outcomes. Such an approach serves to weaken people's sense of professional identity and reduce their decision-making capacities. This evidence from the research strikes at two areas in which conflict or incompatibility between government policies and professional integrity is apparent:

- the government's *espoused* partnership with the voluntary sector;
- the demands made through ECM policy documentation on welfare professionals to provide holistic, integrated welfare support whilst working to an imposed regime of output-based indicators and performance targets.

### **The "delegitimation" of advocacy.**

*"Yes, they [the government] work on a deficit model. I have this 'engagement' programme that students come in on and the students do something chaotic in school and then they get excluded. I cannot see the point in running an engagement programme when they're going to be excluded from it".*

Transcript, Inclusion Manager, p.9.

One of the consequences of the incompatibilities between policy and welfare support/social care, is a significant, negative outcome that is described as emanating from the “exclusion of lower level professionals from the management of need and a *delegitimation of advocacy*” (Clarke et al p.55). For the purposes of this research study, I have chosen to interpret this phrase as describing the negative effect of these incompatibilities on the quality of welfare agency support through ways in which the advocacy of the welfare agency is seen to lose, or relinquish, the authorisation with which it was originally invested. For example, if a Youth Offending Team does not successfully structure a multi agency support package for a vulnerable young adult, (see Ben’s comments in Box 7.16), then it is no longer fulfilling the role of a Youth Offending Team in the eyes of the clients, the youth justice system and the welfare sector at large. This provides a useful context in which to consider more closely Ben’s particular circumstances. How does it arise that a significant welfare agency fails to advocate for a vulnerable adult who is so obviously in need of integrated support? One answer is that where the negative effects of social policy (such as reduced staffing or the imposition of stringent, output - based performance targets) are particularly apparent in the *management* of the welfare agencies, the coverage/capacity of their professional workforces will be diminished. Resulting economies such as the exclusion of “lower level professionals from the management of need” (Clarke et al. 2000, p. 55) equates to the reduction in important but less well paid support functions, such as administration, clerical and office management. If these are “streamlined” in a drive to hit targets or achieve greater economy it is likely that the quality of work carried out by the professionals at the front line will be diminished, because either they have to

assume additional responsibilities for some of the support functions or the functions are not fulfilled. In Ben's case, the capacity of his local YOT could have been diminished as a result of economies within the local authority that precluded opportunities for the YOT to work with the other agencies that were involved in Ben's welfare difficulties. In Michael's case the school's patriarchal ethos could have been born out of a single minded drive to improve the school's academic performance (thereby hitting targets and performance indicators more successfully) at the expense of those students who were vulnerable or who had a particularly challenging set of needs.

### **Letting go of the characteristics of control and predictability.**

*"12 months ago, I was asked to write the [exclusion] policy. I had a series of options and suggested to the Heads that they didn't agree on any of the options, but agreed on them all, because what we have to do is make a decision based on the child. It has to be constantly child centred".*

Transcript Inclusion Manager, p. 9.

A factor contributing to the perceived "patriarchal society" (Michelle, Box 7.22 and Gerry Box, 7.23) is suggested in the literature:

"One difficulty..... is letting go of the characteristics of control and predictability, typically those characteristics that policy makers and managers want to find in real life situations" (Chapman, 2004, p.12).

In this quotation, Chapman is referring to one of the limitations of the government's current approach to policy making. These characteristics of "control and predictability" resonate with the patriarchal attitude that the

research respondents refer to in the research data and also correspond to the “tight, centralised form of control” discussed in response to Gerry’s comments in Box 7.23. Chapman argues for a systemic perspective to replace the current mechanistic approach to policy making, which he sees as responsible for the “failure to learn, that exists within government and the civil service” (ibid, p.12) that fails to handle complexity “and its associated lack of predictability and control”. A systems approach, he argues, would focus on “*learning*, as the way to handle complexity and its associated lack of predictability”. The advantages of such an approach would be to obviate the inappropriateness of social policies that are written and conceived within the discourse of predictability and control and therefore tend to assume, wrongly, that the complexities associated with welfare support can somehow be “regulated” and the effectiveness of the policies measured through quantitative or output-base indicators. Such an assumption, on the part of the policy makers, could be a contributory factor in shaping Michelle’s and Gerry’s perceptions of patriarchy (within the welfare domain) that emerge from the research data.

Systemic learning, according to Chapman, enshrines an approach that requires people to be “willing to work jointly with those who have other perspectives and to reflect on the outcomes of their actions and modify their behaviours....on the basis of that reflection”. He explicates this type of learning as a “continuous process [that] is different from the skills and knowledge type of learning that is usually ‘delivered’ on courses of instruction”, which has a direct link with Conclusions 1 and 2 from Finding 3. These conclusions refer to the skills and capacities of the workforce for “older younger people” and vulnerable adults, which should “go beyond simply ‘providing’ and ‘knowing’ and ‘understanding’”

and incorporate “the capacity of staff to instill their role with a more vicarious approach to their work” in order to engage more actively with vulnerable young adults in helping them to fulfil their higher levels of need (becoming independent and giving a meaning to their lives)”. Chapman’s definition of systemic learning could be useful to the training and professional development of each of the welfare agency workforces, particularly aspects such as reflection and working jointly with people who have other (professional) perspectives.

### **“A bad day or parliamentary democracy”.**

At the time of writing, (October 2009) the Commons Select Committee for the Department of Children, Schools and Families had been involved in a new role (for Select Committees) which was to conduct a pre-appointment hearing, by interviewing the appointee who had been selected, by the Secretary of State, to be the new Children’s Commissioner. This new role for Select Committees is to ensure that senior public appointments are seen to be made in the interest of the public they serve and not the interests of the senior minister to whom they answer. A new appointment had been made by the Secretary of State for Education and after the Select Committee had conducted their interview with the appointee it was their opinion that she (the appointee) did not have:

*“....the independence of mind to stand up to a Secretary of State who loves to get his own way. Mr X (the Secretary of State concerned) is a bit of a bully” (Today Programme, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009).*

The Chair of the Committee commented that: “it is a bad day for parliamentary democracy when the very first committee to say it did not agree with the [an] appointment gets over-ridden [by the senior member of the government to whom the committee answer]” (ibid). This comment has some bearing on the 4<sup>th</sup> Finding of this second research study because it suggests that the characteristics of control and predictability that resonate with the “patriarchal” attitude, referred to by one of the research respondents, are also present in the government at the highest level. This is indicated, in the above example, by the Secretary of State over-riding the decision of the Select Committee. The members of the Committee were fulfilling their role, newly allotted to them by the government, specifically to safeguard public appointments from any undue influence by the government. When questioned about this, the Chair of the Select Committee pointed out that the Committee considered the appointee to be an excellent person for the post, but they felt she would not be able to “stand up to” the Secretary of State. This example from current government practice echoes certain aspects of the research data that contribute to this fourth finding. Michelle’s comments about the influence of the “patriarchal attitude of society” on the outcomes of her son’s life chance reflect her own, personal perceptions of the constraints/influences she had identified in the ethos and values of her son’s school (and in society at large):

*“we live in a patriarchal society that is damaging to our sons”....*

Box 7.22.

When analysing this data, my purpose was not to use it to make any kind of *generalised* assertion, such as “the state of schools today” or “society takes a

patriarchal attitude towards education/welfare”. Indeed, either of these assertions made on their own would be both inaccurate and opposed to the purposes of my chosen methodological framework of phenomenology, which is to capture data that derives from respondents’ standpoints of “lived life” and that have an “emphasis on the existing individual” (Section 6.5, A new theoretical framework: phenomenology) . Michelle’s comments reflect her own individual points of view about factors of vulnerability *as she sees them affecting her own and her family’s lives*.

The purpose of this second research study was to analysis the data (that comprised the respondents’ personal perceptions and experiences of vulnerability) within the framework of my Model for Analysis (Box 6.6), in which the second stage focused on pinpointing “truly original or unique observations/perceptions” and “any conflicts within the data...”. I considered Michelle’s comments about living in “a patriarchal society” to be a truly original perception and that is why I coded and incorporated it into my Atlas ti data analysis maps (see Section 6.10, Atlas ti and its suitability for this research study). Through this model for analysis, I identified further data that supported Michelle’s viewpoint and discussed these with reference to the relevant literature; critical social policy and social policy. This process in turn highlighted several relevant analytical concepts, particularly from the critical social policy area of managerialism, within which conceptual framework I discussed this particular finding.

The above example of the Secretary of State over-riding the role of the Commons Select Committee could be seen as a pertinent example of



“patriarchy in action”, with a degree of irony; the appointment to be made was that of the new Children’s Commissioner, who was to:

“act as an independent champion for children, particularly those suffering disadvantage” (Great Britain: 2003c).

## **Conclusions.**

1. The research data gives evidence of schools whose ethos and values (no doubt unwittingly), conspired to foster the sort of environment in which a minority of vulnerable young people (the young men whose mothers I interviewed through POPS) were in danger of falling into the trap of offending behaviour. This outcome is perceived through the data as being attributable to the existence of a “patriarchal society”, which fosters a poor role model for young people. I have not used the data analysis to imply that the schools in question were deliberately setting up the young people for failure, but rather that the prevailing systems and values were perhaps akin to a more traditional, patriarchal style of leadership and management associated with a past age, when corporal punishment and enforced discipline were the norm. Where this was the case, this perceived “patriarchal attitude” actually presented a barrier to securing the successful outcomes of the ECM programme for and on behalf of the particular young people whose mothers I interviewed.
2. Looking across wider welfare agency domain, the data also refer to government documentation in which the tone and nature is described as “dictatorial” and “authoritarian”, implying a prescriptive, centralised form of

control, similar to the patriarchal attitude perceived by the respondents in the POPS interviews.

3. “An increasing separation between policy and delivery has acted as a barrier to involving, in policy-making, those people who are responsible for delivering on the front line....”. The literature is critical of the lack of joined-up government at both policy and management level and of the “fragmenting effects of managerialism” (Clarke et al p. 52). Linking this with Finding 2 (“The Importance of the Voluntary Sector”) helps to pinpoint what is at the heart of the difficulties that stem from the differences between the aims and philosophies of the voluntary and Community Sector and the aims of government policies. This conflict has been described as the “tension between the economic and social goals [of Labour]....” and that “....collaboration between providers around client needs in social care is not compatible with....output based performance indicators” (Clarke et al p.55). The research evidence from the second finding identifies two aspects of social policy in which conflict/incompatibility are apparent:

- the government’s espoused partnership with the voluntary sector;
- the demands made through ECM policy documentation on welfare professionals to provide holistic, integrated welfare support whilst working to an imposed regime of output-based indicators and performance targets.

4. “One difficulty..... is letting go of the characteristics of control and predictability, typically those characteristics that policy makers and

managers want to find in real life situations” (Chapman, 2004, p.12).

Chapman argues for a systemic perspective to replace the current mechanistic approach to policy making, which he sees as responsible for the “failure to learn, that exists within government and the civil service” (ibid, p.12) that fails to handle complexity “and its associated lack of predictability and control”. The research data show that his linear, mechanistic approach adopted by the government towards its policy making can result in the failure of welfare agencies to advocate for vulnerable adults/young people, despite their obvious need for effective, integrated support. The literature describes this as a “delegitimation of advocacy”.

5. There is very recent evidence to suggest that the characteristics of control and predictability that resonate with the “patriarchal” attitude that the research respondents refer to, are also present in the government at the highest level. This refers to the recent appointment of a new Commissioner for Children by the Secretary of State for Education, who over-rode the committee’s opinion that the appointee did not possess “*the independence of mind to stand up to a Secretary of State who loves to get his own way*” (BBC, Today Programme, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

## **8. Chapter 8. Reflections on criticality, analytical concepts and the findings from the second research study.**

### **8.1. Findings from the second research study.**

Below is a resume of my findings from the second research study followed by a consideration of what, in this research project, I might have done differently, particularly with regard to the criticality and analytical concepts that comprised my framework for analysis.

**Criticality:** the chosen direction of my “....objective analysis and evaluation....” of the research data “....in order to form a judgement” (*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary of Historical Principles* 1973).

In Section 6.6, “Links between vulnerability and conditions for learning”, I argued that circumstances of vulnerability and deprivation equated with poor conditions for learning, which in turn gave rise to a child’s/young person’s negative sense of security, identity and stability. This line of discussion directed my thinking towards the formulation of the second research question. Diagram 6.3: The emerging theoretical and analytical framework: stages of thinking, reflects this process of thought and resulted in the framing of a second research question:

*“Is the government’s championing for effective integrated services, early intervention and improved life chances for the most vulnerable children, young people and their families simply a part of the process of modernising the welfare services away from the “statism” of post war years, towards the processes and systems of new managerialism”?*

After this I reviewed the literature that was located in a far more political context than hitherto, that of critical social policy. I found the literature in the field of managerialism to be particularly relevant to the discussions and issues that had arisen from the findings from my first research study and this helped me to articulate a new range of analytic concepts, any one of which

appeared to be relevant to the new direction of my research. Some of the concepts I chose to focus on included:

- The significance of the role of the voluntary sector in providing welfare support for vulnerable children, young people and their families. This concept is discussed in the literature with regard to the high expectation that the government now has of the voluntary sector as a partner which is reflected in “social policies that devolve central state responsibility to local partnerships”....and a discourse about partnership that “serves to create an “illusory unity” that masks the need to “engage with the gritty political realities of divergent and conflicting goals (Clarke et al,2000, p.54).
- The evidence-based approach to social policy (Chapman 2004 and Clarke 2000). Most of my analysis and interpretation refers to Chapman’s writing about the government’s “linear, mechanistic approach” to policy making, which reflects their insistence on an “evidence-based” approach. Chapman argues that policy that is based on evidence from quantitative, statistical data “conceals as much as it reveals” (ibid. p.11). This is also argued as an approach that “takes no account of the... issues such as individual need, diagnosis, rehabilitation” because these issues tend to be replaced with “‘actuarial’ techniques of classification, risk assessment and resource management” by Clarke (2000, p.178).
- Maslow’s hierarchy of need. Despite the ubiquity with which Maslow’s hierarchy appears to arise in theory and debate (certainly, from my experience, in the field of management and motivation). I selected it

as analytic tool for this research study because Maslow conceptual framework closely matches the language in which the young offender respondents chose to describe their experiences. This choice was based on its (Maslow's) usefulness in analysing the elements of good and not so good practice that emerged with regard to the workforce that supported the young adults (older young people) I interviewed. As a consequence, my analysis went beyond a consideration of *quantifiable* competences and skills and incorporated aspects such as judgement and values, and their significance both to the young adults I interviewed and the people who worked with them.

A selection of those alternative concepts that I might just as easily have chosen to focus on is shown below (each is taken from Diagram 5.2:

Conceptual Framework (2):

- The breakdown of the family. "Many speak of [this]....[and] if this is so it is extremely significant. Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation and the engine driving urgent social problems from crime to adolescent pregnancy to child sexual abuse".
- Hindrances to young fathers sharing the care of children: Research shows that these include: "...children's mothers' new boyfriends; influence of the mothers' families and role of the maternal grandmother". Speak Cameron and Gilroy, 1997.
- The context of young fathers. "The context is likely to be: more disadvantaged backgrounds; lower levels of qualifications than those

who became fathers over the age of 25 years". Speak Cameron and Gilroy, 1997.

- Barriers to multi agency working. "...deep rooted cultural differences between professional groups' vested interests in maintaining departmental boundaries and statutory restrictions may undermine efforts to engage in partnership working". Bagley et al. 2000.
- Process of (Ofsted) inspections. The "Inspecting agencies....make judgements about good practice without examining actual local practices". (Broadhurst et al. 2009).

I chose not to pursue these further and incorporate them into my research because whilst they represented, in themselves, very interesting areas for debate and analysis, I did not consider them to be sufficiently relevant to opening up a discourse within which to debate the research perspectives of both research studies.

## **8.2. Resume of findings from the second research study.**

The main findings from the second research study span issues and domains that go beyond those associated with the (mostly) practical implications of the ECM/YM agenda, which were the focus of the first research study and, briefly, they incorporate:

1. Evidence of the limitations of the government's evidence/output - based approach to social policies. (Finding 1).
2. Overwhelming evidence to support the significance of the voluntary sector in supporting those young people and families who are vulnerable

and who struggle against very difficult personal circumstances. (Finding 2).

3. The identification of models of good practice that provide better support (than those currently available through agencies such as social housing and social care organisations) for vulnerable young adults (or 'older young people'), aged from 17- 24 years. This higher quality of support is apparent in the ways in which the models support older vulnerable young people in their more complex, higher levels of need, such as self worth, realisation of potential and self actualisation (finding 3).
4. Evidence of underachievement and very negative behaviour (for example a history of truanting from school that results in permanent exclusion) that arise as the result of prevailing attitudes and ways in which agencies can, perhaps unwittingly, contribute to fostering the sort of environment in which:
  - a minority of children and young people are in real danger of falling into the trap of offending behaviour (the research data refers to the "patriarchal society" as a cause of this);
  - nuanced institutional attitudes and behaviour create anxiety and frustration for young adult offenders and their families (the research data cites this as an outcome of the institutionalized attitudes of, for example, staff in prisons).(Finding 4).

The research respondents of this second study were drawn from senior agency professionals, managers within the voluntary sector and a group of vulnerable people who had a particular set of welfare needs. The findings reveal aspects of what the respondents perceived as constituting good and poor practice in their



experiences of the welfare agencies and are the outcomes of an analysis that was conducted within the regime of a model that was structured specifically for this second research study (see Chapter 6, Box 6.6: Model for Analysis (Research Study 2)).

Of the four findings, I identified the second (the significance of the voluntary sector) “as an issue that could be of overall significance to the research study and so decided to include this within my analysis model” (Chapter 6, Section 6.6). Of the four findings are considered together, several of the aspects relate to the voluntary sector:

- One of the models of good practice referred to in finding 3 was located within the charity LSA (a charity/not for profit organisation in receipt of funding from a public body).
- The “institutional attitudes and behaviour that create anxiety for young offenders and their families” (finding 3) as they are discussed in the analysis, were seen to be countered by the contrasting empathetic and altogether more understanding support provided by workers from the voluntary organisation POPS: “they perceive that the workers from POPS fulfil a role that is far more sensitive and empathetic” (Chapter 7, conclusion 1) and similarly from LSA: “There is a non-judgemental approach prevalent towards all young people” (Chapter 7, Table 7.6. Supporting vulnerable young adults: the key elements of good practice).

### **8.3. Impact on and implications for practice.**

My analysis of the research data from this second study reveals the considerable significance of the role played by charities and organisations in the

voluntary/third sector in providing very effective support to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It would be useful to have feedback from the charitable/voluntary organisations who participated in the research study, about any impact these findings might have on the work they do, such as supporting bids for funding, helping to promote their services or in other ways. When I contacted CPDA to ask the managers about this their response was:

*“I have in the past used a graduate’s report with the joint working we do with (a housing support scheme). I used this in conjunction with LSC (Learning and Skills Council) funding which proved useful in bid applications, so referring to this (doctoral research) may have similar benefits”.* (Manager, LSA).

The findings from the first research study indicated where and how practice across the welfare agencies might be more finely tuned, in order to reflect better the aims and objectives of the Every Child Matters/Youth Matters programme. The findings from the second study provided the *evidence* of the need to do this. This evidence refers to:

- aspects of an outputs/evidence-based approach to social policy making (finding 1) that can result in a diagnosis of need that is undertaken in isolation from the holistic welfare context of a child or young person. The complexities in the lives of children and young people with high levels of welfare need often give rise to many unintended outcomes, which *cannot* be measured;
- the gap that exists within the overall workforce for the provision of care and support for a particular group of vulnerable “older young people”

aged between 16 and 24 years. This group of hard-to-reach people struggle to catch up in their lives, after experiencing failure at school, crime and/or unemployment. Whilst a core of skills exists for the children's and young people's workforce, there is nothing similar available to guide and inform those who work with vulnerable people in this older age group;

- schools whose ethos and values ,perhaps unwittingly, conspire to foster the sort of environment in which a minority of children and young people are in real danger of falling into the trap of offending behaviour. Whilst the schools in question were not deliberately setting up the young people for failure, the prevailing systems and values were akin to a more traditional, patriarchal style of leadership and management.

The above outcomes of my data analysis refer specifically to the experiences of vulnerable young people and their families within the welfare paradigms of the prison service, the criminal justice sector and education. However, what became increasingly apparent to me during both research studies is the extent to which it is impossible to separate out the impacts and outcomes of the different welfare agencies on the lives of the young people concerned (and their families). No one "story" told by the research participants was located in a specific welfare context; the evidence from their narratives spanned several/all of the different agencies. The following two excerpts from interview transcripts exhibit the high degree of overlap that is apparent across the different welfare agencies.

### **Excerpt 1: overlap with the welfare agencies.**

*“the support services, they’ve been absolutely useless.....  
....that offence – it should have been custodial....but they  
took everything into account – my depression and everything  
– they put me on a 12 month rehabilitation order....the order  
would have been all well and good.... I’ve seen my YOT  
worker twice, three times (in ten months).... and that’s only to  
say hello how are you. No rehabilitation has gone on  
whatsoever”.*

Transcript Ben.P.9.

In Excerpt 1, Ben is referring to the welfare agencies overall and he gives examples of conflicting practice across and within the criminal justice system, notably the judiciary and the local authority’s Youth Offending Team.

### **Excerpt 2: overlap with the welfare agencies.**

*“POPS (workers) are based in prison and they “go over the wall”. They  
provide excellent liaison regarding personal tutoring; release on temporary  
license and they enabled him [her so]) to sit his exams”.*

Transcript POPS,p.8.

In Excerpt 2, the partners of prisoners are describing how the support given by the workers at POPS (the voluntary organisation supporting them) overlaps with

their sons' education provision, the terms of their release licenses and the bureaucracy of the public examination system.

#### **8.4. Related, recent research and possibilities for further/continuing studies.**

The above section suggests potential areas for further research purposes across the wider welfare spectrum; for example, within a multi-disciplinary research project. This would enable the integration of a number of different research foci relevant to exploring the complexities of multi-deprivation and vulnerability (incorporating issues such as teenage pregnancy, post natal care, social housing and early years' development).

##### **8.4.1. The Demos research project.**

Aspects of my research findings are reflected in a recent, large scale national research project conducted by Demos. At the time of writing (March 2010) the outcomes of this year-long research project on children and young people's disengagement from education had just been published, (Sodha and Margo 2010, p. 20). This larger scale project yields a broad set of findings that serve to support aspects of the findings from both of my own research studies. The Demos report identifies several "risk factors for disengagement" that are based on the findings of a series of qualitative workshops that were conducted with 11-14-year-olds at risk of disengagement in Pupil Referral Units and Schools nationally. These risk factors include:

1. "Parenting and the home environment are the most profound factor[s], influencing child outcomes....".

2. “What your parents do. High levels of parental warmth and love are associated with better behavioural and cognitive development....”
3. “School factors. ....the quality of teaching. Other factors important to both academic and behavioural outcomes are the emotional quality of the classroom, and the warmth of adult/child interactions in a school” (ibid pp. 19 – 20).

The risk factors 1 and 2 have similarities to the Vulnerability Index, which was created by primary schools in conjunction with the Youth Offending Team in Local authority G, (Appendix, Table A1.2) “to improve on the existing means that schools and other agencies have at their disposal to identify vulnerability (and under-achievement) in children and young people” (Chapter 4, Vulnerability; knowing it or prescribing it?). The Index contained factors for identifying vulnerability in children such as family and parenting issues: the presence of emotional warmth, domestic violence, bereavement and anxiety about separation, all of which refer to a child’s home background.

The ‘school factors’ included in risk factor 3 link closely with finding 1 from my second research study, which argues that a purely evidence-based approach to providing support for vulnerable children can fail to take account of other complex welfare issues in their lives. The constraints of a purely evidence-based approach were evident in the case of Chris (second research study); the early diagnosis of his ADHD triggered one-to-one support for him in school, but this failed to provide him with any sustainable advantage in the longer term. His own background was chaotic and fragile and he found it impossible to sit and concentrate within the traditional classroom setting; his response to these circumstances was in the form of extreme, negative behaviour and so for him

the 'emotional quality of the classroom' and adult/child interactions were at best poor:

**Excerpt 3: forming relationships.** *"I do think there is a problem however for those youngsters who have a history of not forming relationships because they can't or because they are guarded or judgemental about what will happen to them or they feel other people will be judgemental about them".*

Transcript Inclusion Manager, p.2.

In Excerpt 3, the Inclusion Manager (interviewed for the second research study) explains something of the conflict and complexity of the personal circumstances of a vulnerable young person like Ben and Chris. Their behaviour and responses to welfare interventions (including education) has to be seen in the light of their fragile and often chaotic personal circumstances at home. If there is no routine, stability or warmth at home, then they will inevitably find it very difficult to form relationships in the more formal environment of school. Rather than treating this as an isolated behavioural problem (as was the case for Chris, who was diagnosed with ADHD), it needs to be seen as an outcome of the way a child is treated at home and (I would suggest) the home circumstances viewed as one of the root causes for his/her behaviour.

### **8.5. Further research.**

A detailed exploration of the home circumstances outlined above would yield original data (that might be shocking in the extent and range of the

neglect/incompetence they reveal) for analysis that could provide a powerful tool with which to argue for different, more appropriate social/welfare policies that actually address the root causes of the circumstances of vulnerability in children and young people.

The data and findings that arise from my two research studies suggest a number of areas for further research; for example, similar studies to explore further the circumstances of young men at risk and the impact of these circumstances on their children and partners. It would be interesting to follow up and extend my own understanding of the role played by the voluntary/third sector across the broader spectrum of welfare provision, looking at how the sector contributes to supporting the different welfare agencies, not just those connected with the criminal justice sector.

The outcomes of the Demos study also indicate there is much research to be done in the area of policies (specifically education policies) that actively support and mitigate the deprived circumstances of the most vulnerable children and their families:

*“The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continues to confound policy makers. Policy initiatives have not worked to combat this seemingly intractable problem, largely because they are designed to impact too late, when a young person’s disengagement from their education is already endemic”. (Sodha and Margo 2010 p. 15).*



The findings from my doctoral research studies resonate with this argument and suggest the need for further research that focuses on the *reasons* why overall social policies do not appear to engage with and address the root causes of vulnerability. This is also endorsed in the Demos report:

*“...we spend far less on successful initiatives to tackle the underlying causes of this disengagement, such as poor literacy and numeracy and support with parenting in the early years”*  
(Sodha and Margo, p.15).

The findings from my second research study identify characteristics of good, integrated practice in welfare provision that could be of practical use both to local authority welfare agencies and providers of training/education to practitioners working/planning to work in the children and young people’s workforce. The findings might also be useful in the development of guidelines and the training and development of people who work with the group identified in the second research study as “vulnerable older young people”, for whom there is no dedicated workforce (other than that available through universal adult services in local authorities).

## **Conclusions.**

For the closing comments to this thesis, I have drawn on selected data from the second research study, because they reflect the “real life” perceptions of senior welfare agency professionals of those aspects of the delivery of welfare support that fall short of the aims of the ECM/YM agenda, each of which links with findings from the first research study.

### **Example 8.1.**

*“What we have now is a lot of diversity training. We all know about gender, race,*

**Example 8.2.**

*"People perceive that their professional decision-making is limited to what the government says it can do. As a manager it's hard to say you still have your professional code of conduct to work to".*

MEMO: New info: drivers of welfare driven by government 05/08/09 [1]. Atlas ti.

**Example 8.3.**

*"I can't share that information with you, you can't share that information with me, there's distrust between us about what will happen with that information.*

*This [police] superintendent I was talking to about information sharing..... have you ever come across a case where anybody's been 'done' for information sharing"?*

I hope the data analyses and findings from this research project will prove useful to welfare professionals, training providers and those training to work in the welfare agencies, but I also hope that the evidence that highlights the good and not so good aspects of welfare provision might serve to inform the ways in which social policies are written, so that they can be developed to provide a closer “fit” to the needs of the vulnerable in our society and the professionals who work to support them.

## **Appendix.**

### **Example A1. Ethical Framework for PhD research studies**

#### **Accountability.**

The findings from this research project will be available to a wide ranging audience. Amongst these will be the research participants, the people who agree to be interviewed and who provide data and evidence for analysis; the authorities, those bodies, experts and politicians who are (and have been) responsible for administering and evaluating the many initiatives that underpin the framework of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters (ECM and YM.) I also hope to present the research findings in a variety of formats that will be accessible to the wider range of all stakeholders. Before conducting any interviews within a local authority, I will ensure that I have the consent of the research participants and that they are informed about the likely audience for the findings. In the case of working with children and young people, I will obtain the necessary permission from the relevant, responsible adults; either the Head Teacher or case worker/manager, parent/carer and be guided by the policies and codes of conduct of the different agencies.

#### **Confidentiality.**

The findings of my research will not reveal any of the sources by name or geographical location. The local authorities in the first research study will be referred to as authorities C, D and G. Interviewees and all other sources of information will not be named and neither will they be identifiable through any references made.

**Anti-discriminatory.**

The ethos of this research project rejects the legitimacy of any discrimination on the basis of difference such as age, gender, sexual preference, class, ability, ethnicity or religion. Interviewees will be drawn from those who work in the areas of education, health, social services and youth justice and those who are the clients – children, young people and parents. This inclusive approach is designed to reflect as full a range of viewpoints as possible in order to prevent any bias or discrimination.

**Reciprocity.**

All interviews and discussions conducted throughout the research will be structured to allow mutual dialogue and exchange of information between the researcher and participants. The questions used will be entirely open-ended, to allow respondents to express their own opinions and different points of view and to reflect a range of perspectives. One of the aims of the research project is that the results will be read and used by a wide range of stakeholders in the ECM agenda (see above, 2.1.) Ultimately, I hope the research findings will of interest to the children, young people, parents/carers who are the recipients of the services of the care agencies and the professionals who work within the agencies.

**Empowering.**

The main objective of the proposal for this project is to examine the impact of the Every Child/Youth Matters (ECM/YM) agenda on the professional practice within the care and education agencies. Two of the key issues of the agenda are concerned with addressing the reduced life chances of children and young people in impoverished circumstances and the need to do something about

bridging the conspicuous gap in achievement between different children and young people from different socio-economic classes. I hope that the findings from this research will go towards supporting these – and the other - aims of Every Child Matters, through the validity and quality of the analysis of data. (With reference to role of research subjects, see section earlier in research design and below “The difference between the roles of children and adult/professionals as participants.” See also Diagrams 3.2a and 3.2b. Modes of research participation and outcomes: comparison between general model and PhD research).

### **Honouring of professional values.**

All interviews and discussions conducted with professionals within the agencies will comply with their own particular ethical codes of conduct, which will be in no way compromised or threatened by the research.

### **Accessibility.**

It is hoped that the research findings will in some way inform/support the teaching and learning specifically in the Health and Education faculties at the University of Cumbria.

### **Challenging.**

The stated aims of this research proposal are open – ended and at the outset make no attempt to contrive outcomes, because the questions will be open-ended and only partially structured. The research will investigate the impact of the ECM agenda on professional practice and also consider the way its proposed changes are affecting the prevailing cultures and structures within the relevant service areas.

## **Guidelines for planning, conducting and reporting research.**

### **Responsibility to research participants.**

Overall informed consent for interviews and discussions will be obtained through the local authorities and each of the agencies involved. This will be done by showing and discussing the way this research project corresponds to these ethical principles and guidelines.

The rights of all participants will be protected because none will be named and individuals will be identifiable from the findings.

Their confidentiality will be assured because whatever is said during interviews or discussions will not be linked, traced or in any way attributable to the source.

Before any interview, individuals will be given the option of participating or not; their wishes will be respected. (See Appendix 1.)

Through taking part in the interviews, participants will be providing useful insights into their particular circumstances, which will go to establish an important body of data for the purposes of this research.

### **Responsibility to the research community.**

It is hoped that the findings of this research study will be available as a PhD in libraries, provide the content for a range of articles in academic journals and more accessible literature and across other multi-media sources.

The validity and reliability of the methods used in this research project will be maintained through the integrity of the research methods used, explained in the thesis.

**Responsibility to the funding agency.**

Funding is through the University of Cumbria and therefore:

As the funder, the University of Cumbria, will have ownership of the project and interpret and publish the findings as the college sees fit.

Any outside attempts to interfere with the research will be rejected.

I will undertake to provide the University with full accounts how funding money has been spent and will report back on the conduct and findings of the research.

**Responsibility to the public.**

The wide ranging accessibility of the different sources through which the results will be available will help to promote interest in and – it is to be hoped - any benefits that might arise from the research.

The anonymity of participants will be protected.

**Responsibility to the University of Cumbria.**

The reputation of the University of Cumbria will in no way be demeaned by any aspect of this research.

As an educational professional and as an individual, I have CRB (Criminal Research Bureau) clearance through four agencies. These are the University of Cumbria, Ofsted, Capita and my local church diocese.

**The implementation of the guidelines.**

This research study fully complies with and implements the Guidelines as set down.

During the planning stages of this research, a statement has been prepared for all who will participate (see Appendix 1.) This statement establishes the conditions under which the information from interviews would be used. It affirms



that the representation of the views of interviewees will not privilege one or more over others and also informs them that their rights will be upheld and that they have the choice to participate or not.

These ethical principles and guidelines have been discussed in full with my tutor and relevant colleagues to ensure that this project will operate within the principles outlined.

**Table A1.1. Examples, original questions for research study 1.**

	Where can I find the data/who do I interview?	What do I need to know (integrated services)?	Relevant issues to pursue from conceptual framework 1.	Related Core question?
1	DoE; DoCS; HT's	How has the role of the local authority changed in response to the ECM agenda?	Management of change. Barrier to integrated services	Q1
2	DoE; DoCS; HT's	What specific changes are you aware of?	Role of school agency in ECM agenda. Barrier to integrated services	Q1
3	DoE; DoCS; HT's	Has the ECM agenda in any way obscured or altered the schools' focus on educational outcomes and standards?	Tension between educational outcomes and standards local & nationally: Barrier to integrated services	Q2
4	DoE; DoCS; HT's; Governors	Do you think the integrated services receive sufficient funding to implement the wider agenda of ECM?	Reduced resources centrally: Barrier to integrated services and educational outcomes.	Q3
5	DoE; DoCS; HT's; Social Services; CAMHS	What models of extended/full services schools are there in your area?	Extended schools, partnerships: integrated services.	Q1
6	DoE; DoCS; HT's; Social Services; CAMHS	Would you consider any of these to be examples of good practice and if so, why?	Attendance; integrated services and educational outcomes.	Q2

**KEY**

**DOE:** Director of Education. **DoCS:** Director of Children's Services. **CAMHS:** Children's and Adults' Mental Health Services. **HT:** Head Teacher.

**Table A 1.2. VULNERABILITY INDEX. Local authority G, 2007.**

<b>CATEGORY OF VULNERABILITY</b>	<b>Sub categories</b>							
<b>Moves of school</b>	<b>More than 2 in 2 academic years</b>							
<b>Attainment</b>	<b>Below expected levels</b>							
<b>School attendance</b>	<b>Below average</b>	<b>Family history, ie siblings</b>	<b>Punctuality</b>					
<b>Behaviour issues</b>	<b>Acting out or withdrawn</b>	<b>At risk of exclusion</b>						
<b>Social relationships</b>	<b>Difficulty with making and maintaining relationships with peers</b>							
<b>Child Protection</b>	<b>On Child Protection Register</b>							
<b>Looked After Children</b>	<b>Looked After: Care Order</b>	<b>Looked After: Accommodation</b>						
<b>Disability issues</b>	<b>Significant disability</b>							
<b>Developmental milestones</b>	<b>Delayed social emotional or physical development</b>							
<b>Ethnicity/Language</b>	<b>Known ethnic minority or Traveller heritage</b>	<b>English an additional language</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>					
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>School Action</b>	<b>School Action Plus</b>	<b>Statement</b>					

<b>Family and parenting issues</b>	<b>Domestic violence</b>	<b>Emotional warmth</b>	<b>Ensuring safety</b>	<b>Mental health issues</b>	<b>Separation/ loss/ bereavement</b>	<b>Substance misuse</b>	<b>Other issues</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>
<b>Engagement with family</b>	<b>General communication issue</b>	<b>Parent evening attendance</b>	<b>Support with homework</b>	<b>Other issue</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>			
<b>Health issues</b>	<b>Frequent ill health</b>	<b>Long term ill health</b>	<b>Personal hygiene</b>	<b>Other issue</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>			
<b>Transition issues</b>	<b>Setting after admission</b>	<b>Transition between years</b>	<b>Transition during year</b>	<b>Other issue</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>			
<b>Exclusions</b>	<b>Fixed exclusion within last year</b>	<b>Permanent exclusion within last year</b>						
<b>Anti social behaviour</b>	<b>Youth Improvement Support Programme within last year</b>	<b>Family history</b>	<b>Police involvement</b>	<b>YOT within last year</b>	<b>Other issue</b>	<b>Multiple issues</b>		

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